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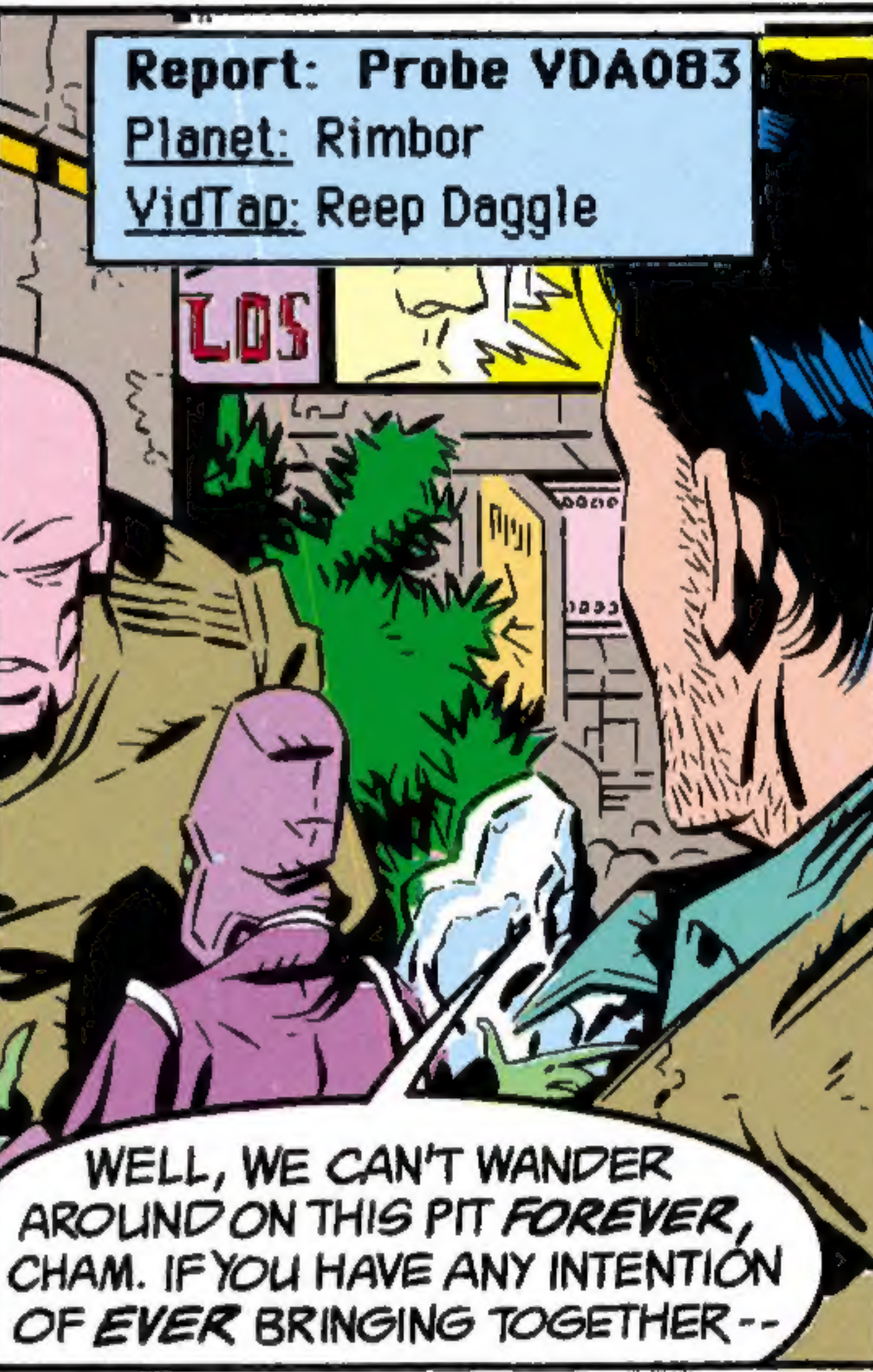
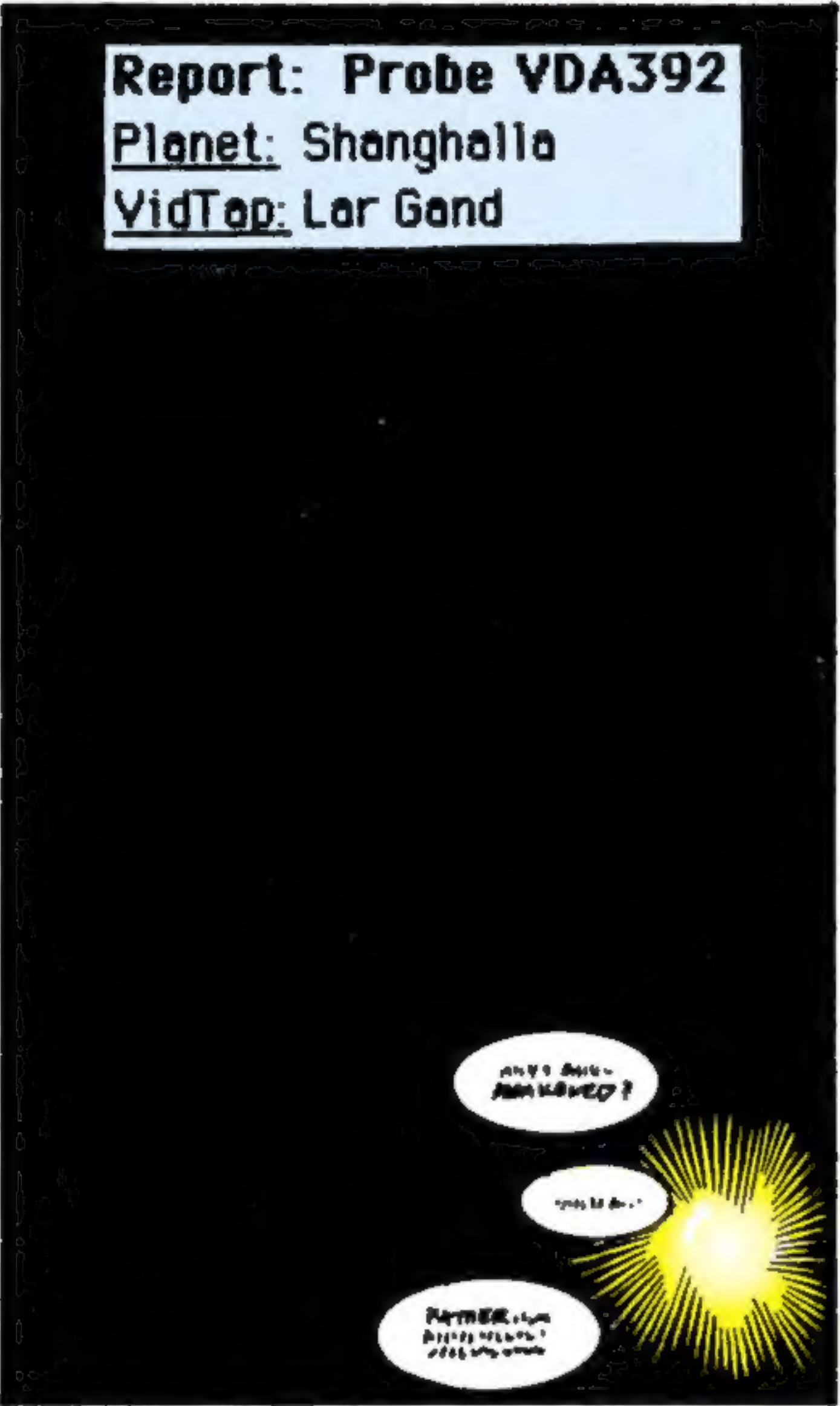
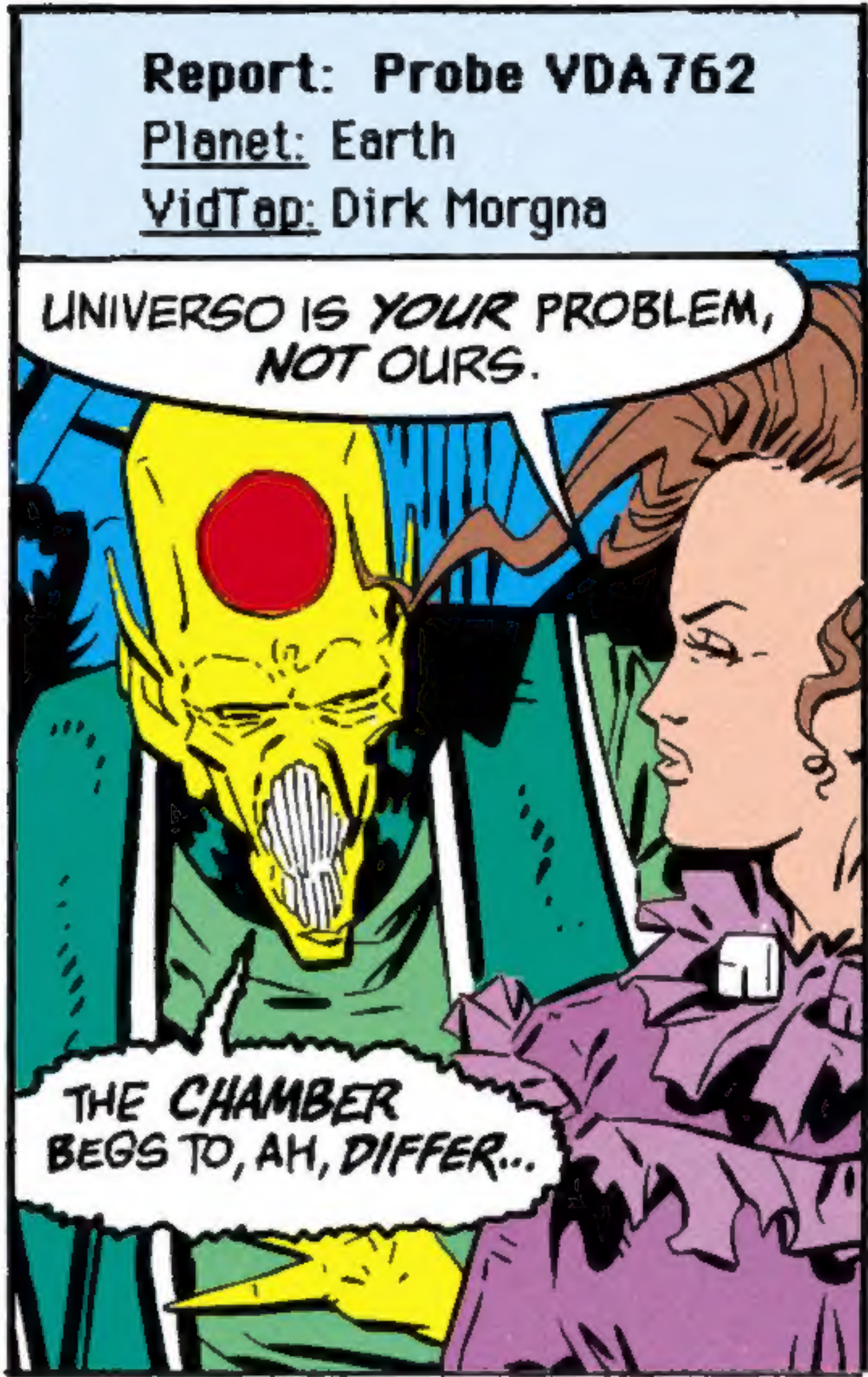
# LEGION

## OF SUPER-HEROES



KEITH GIFFEN • TOM & MARY BIERBAUM • AL GORDON









I LIVE TO SERVE MY MASTER.  
I LIVE TO SERVE MY MASTER.  
I LIVE TO SERVE MY MASTER.  
I LIVE TO SERVE MY MASTER.  
I LIVE TO SERVE MY MASTER.

...bringing together...OH!



I AM HIS EYES, I AM HIS EARS.  
I AM HIS EYES, I AM HIS EARS.  
I AM HIS EYES, I AM HIS EARS.  
I AM HIS EYES, I AM HIS EARS.

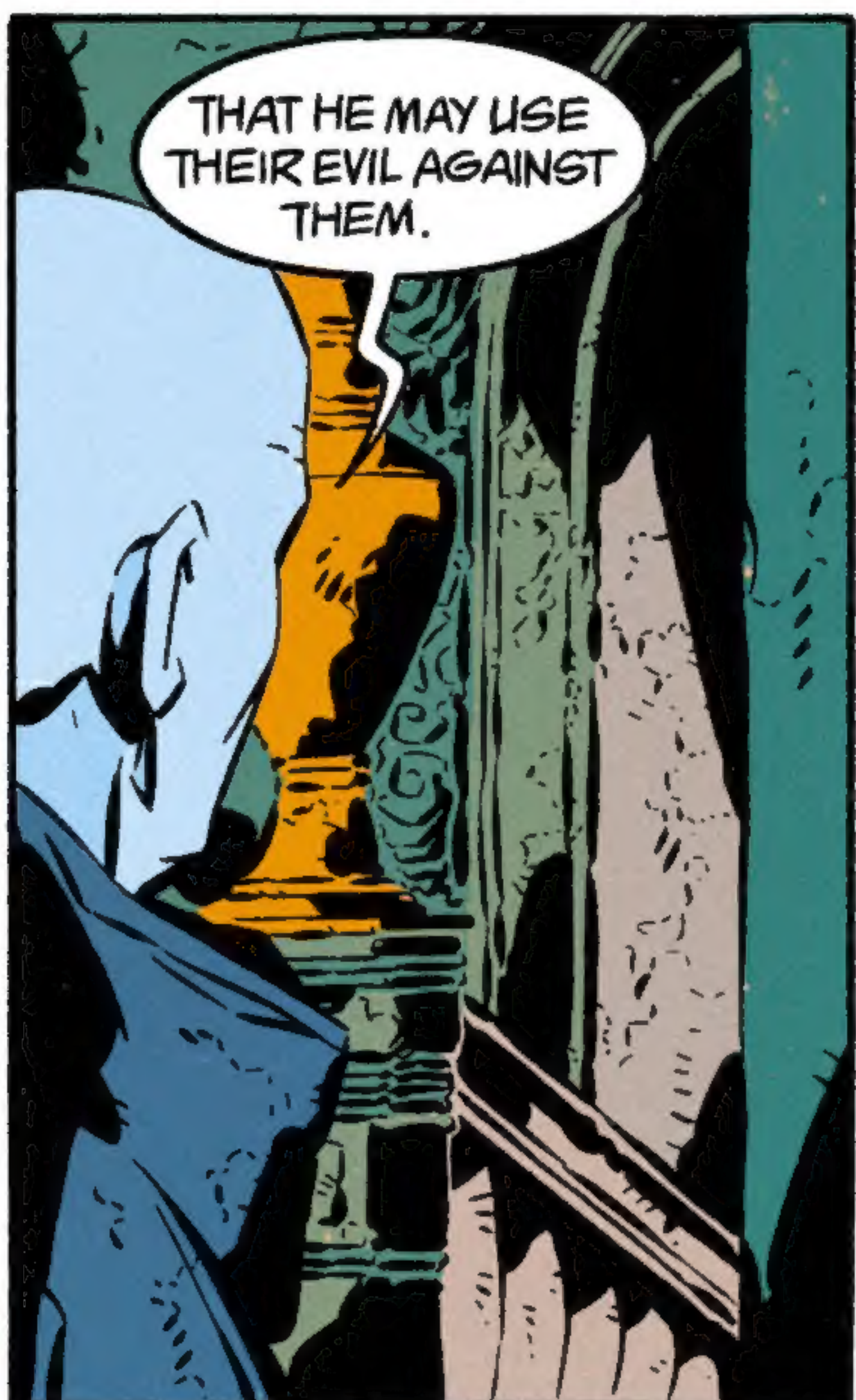
LORD EMPEROR  
MUST BE TOLD.

I AM HIS  
EYES, I AM  
HIS EARS.



TO HIM I DELIVER THE ESSENCE OF HIS ENEMIES.  
TO HIM I DELIVER THE ESSENCE OF HIS ENEMIES.  
TO HIM I DELIVER THE ESSENCE OF HIS ENEMIES.  
TO HIM I DELIVER THE ESSENCE OF HIS ENEMIES.

TO HIM I  
DELIVER THE  
ESSENCE OF  
HIS ENEMIES.



THAT HE MAY USE  
THEIR EVIL AGAINST  
THEM.

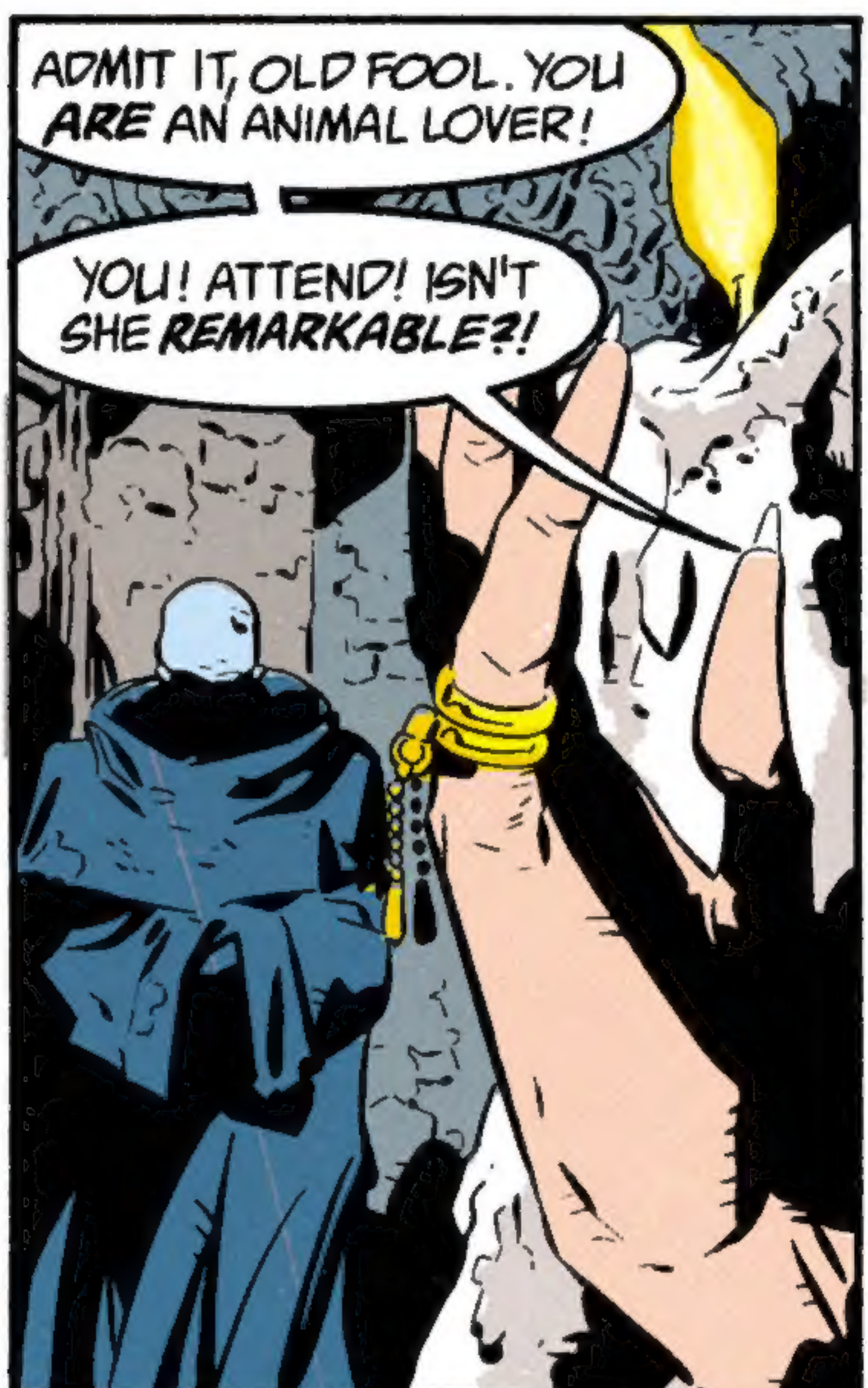


THAT HE MAY  
RULE ALL. THAT HE  
MAY RULE  
FOREVER.



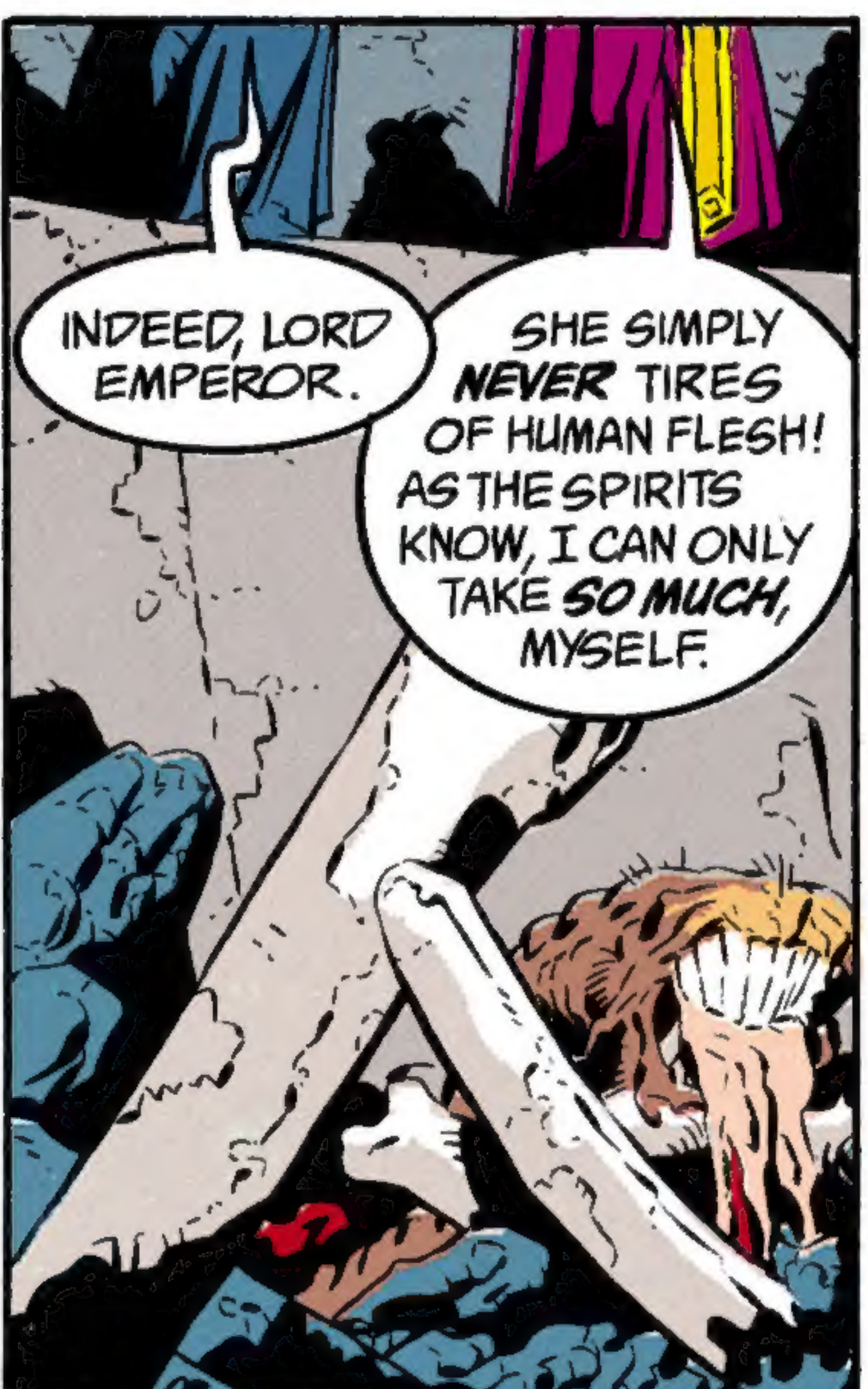
THAT'S A GOOD  
GIRL. tch! tch! GOOD  
GIRL!

FOREVER MAY  
MORDRU REIGN.



ADMIT IT, OLD FOOL. YOU  
ARE AN ANIMAL LOVER!

YOU! ATTEND! ISN'T  
SHE REMARKABLE?!



INDEED, LORD  
EMPEROR.

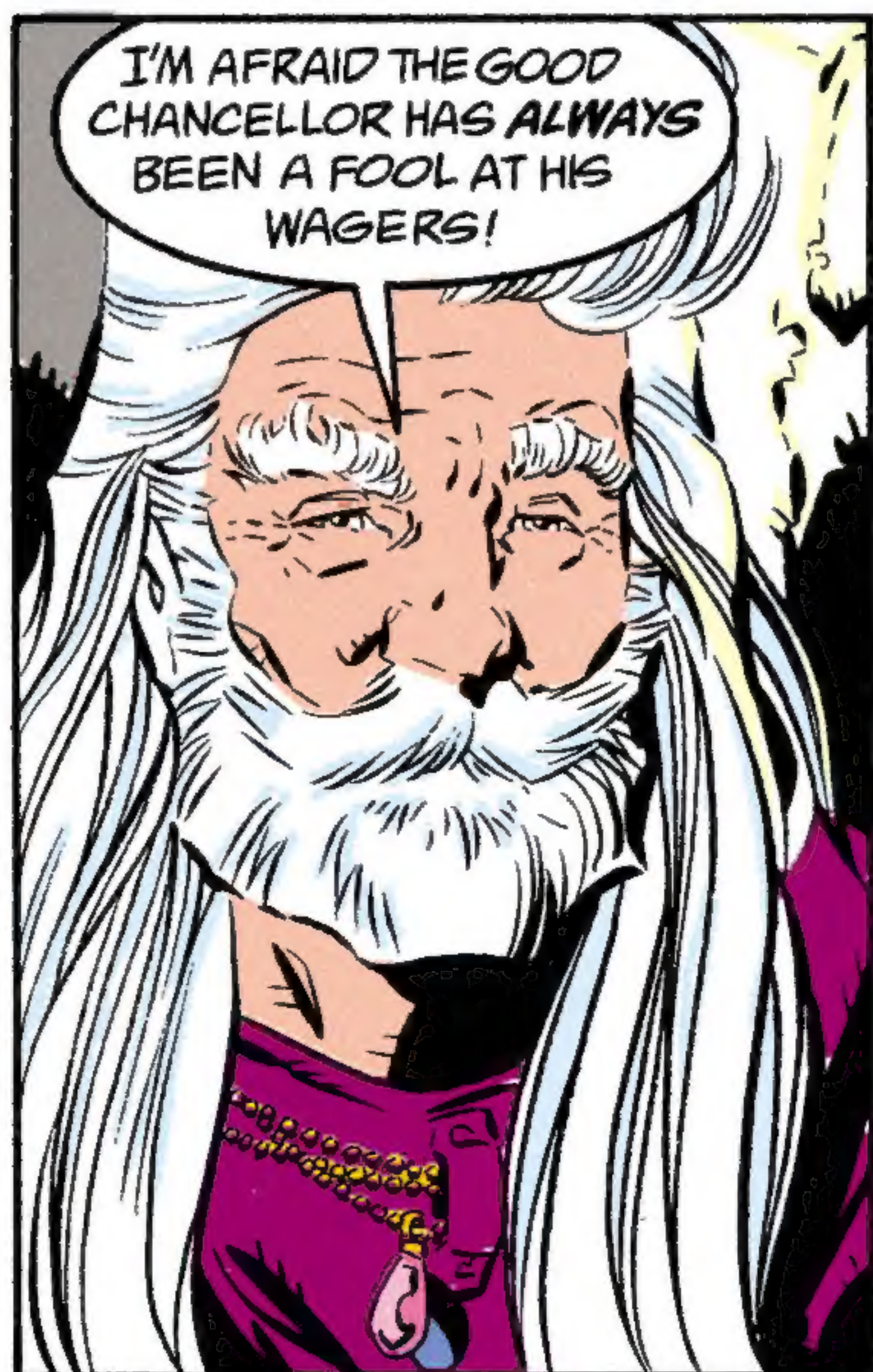
SHE SIMPLY  
NEVER TIRES  
OF HUMAN FLESH!  
AS THE SPIRITS  
KNOW, I CAN ONLY  
TAKE SO MUCH,  
MYSELF.



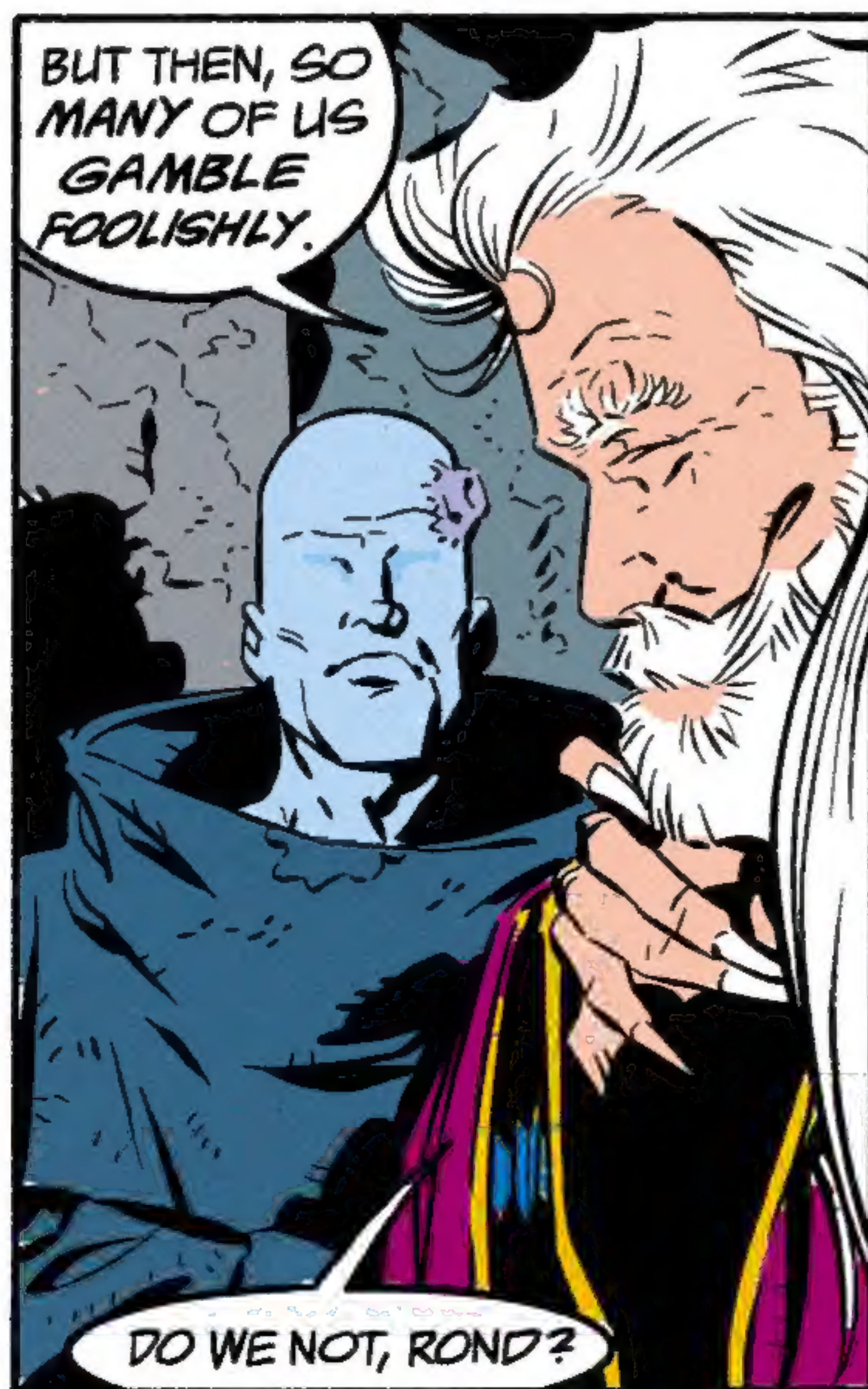
I HAVE A LITTLE  
WAGER WITH THE HIGH  
CHANCELLOR.

I SAY SHE DEVOURS  
THIS LAD ANOTHER TEN  
TIMES BEFORE SHE'S  
SATED!





I'M AFRAID THE GOOD CHANCELLOR HAS ALWAYS BEEN A FOOL AT HIS WAGERS!



BUT THEN, SO MANY OF US GAMBLE FOOLISHLY.

DO WE NOT, ROND?



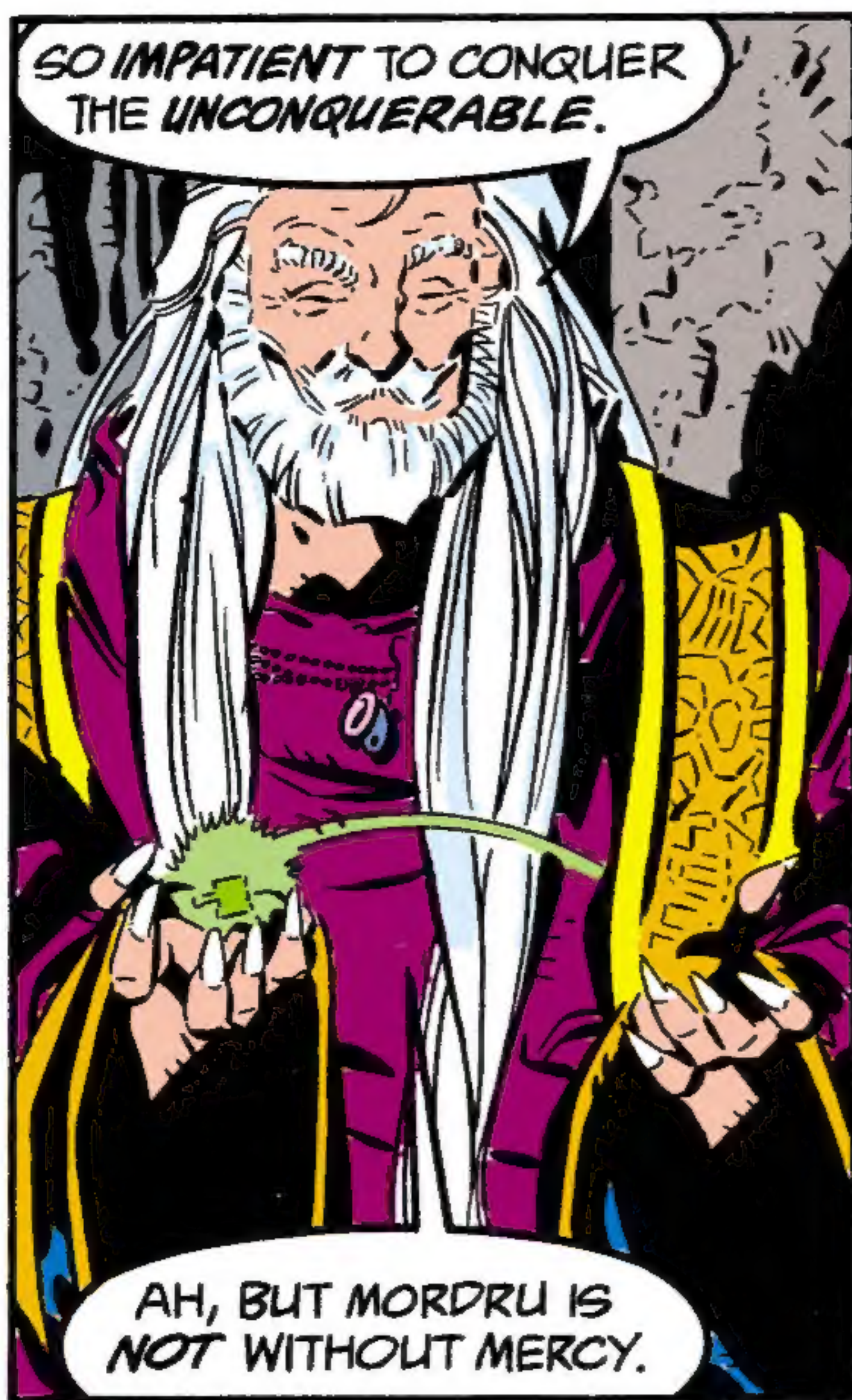
I WAS ONCE YOUNG TOO, YOU KNOW. I REMEMBER WHAT IT'S LIKE!

NO POWER TOO GREAT TO OPPOSE!



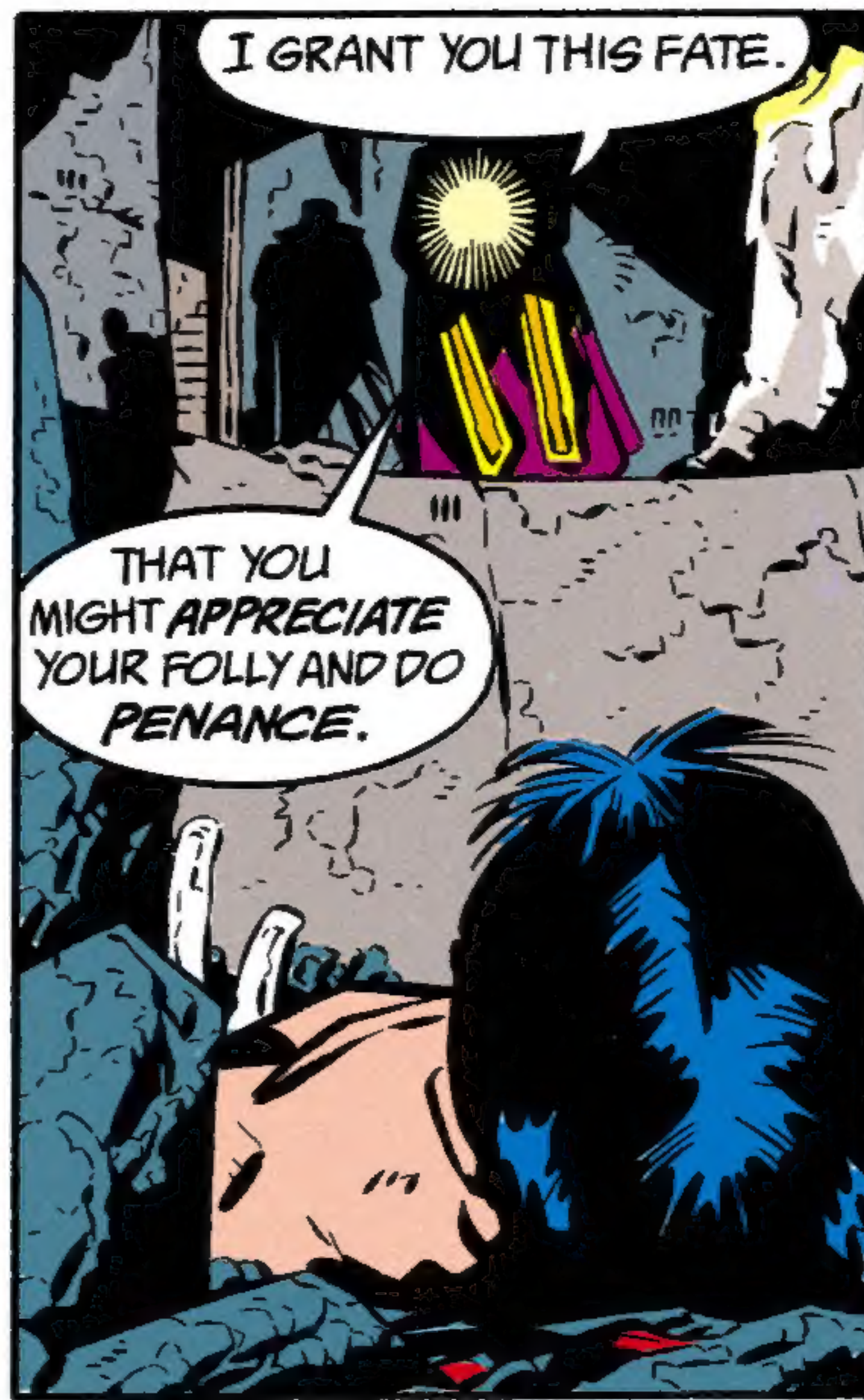
SO CONFIDENT IN YOUR OWN POWER.

SO CERTAIN SOME LITTLE TRINKET CAN OVERCOME ALL.



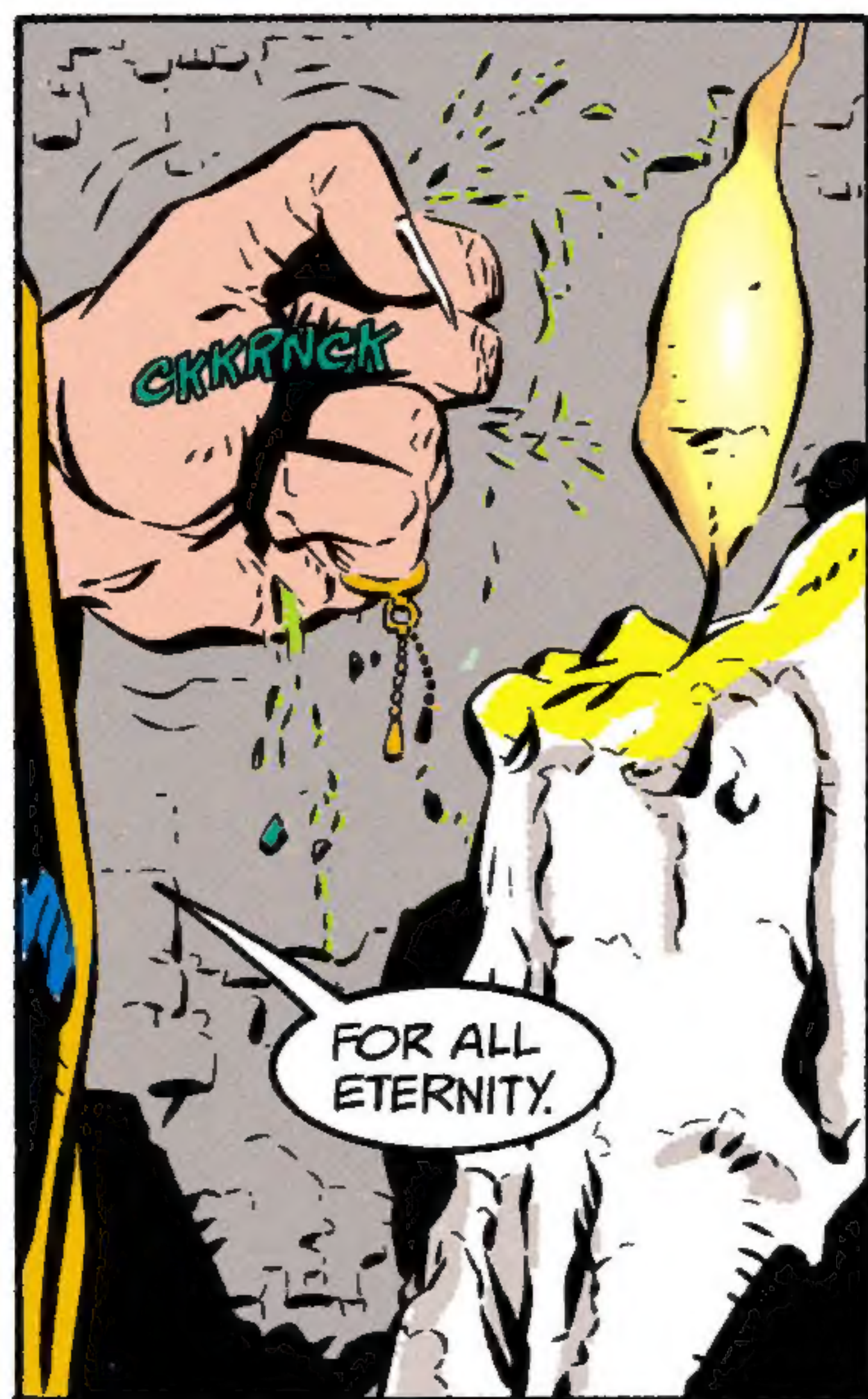
SO IMPATIENT TO CONQUER THE UNCONQUERABLE.

AH, BUT MORDRU IS NOT WITHOUT MERCY.



I GRANT YOU THIS FATE.

THAT YOU MIGHT APPRECIATE YOUR FOLLY AND DO PENANCE.



CKKRACK

FOR ALL ETERNITY.



BUT I NEGLECT YOU, MY SUBJECT.

DO SPEAK.



LORD EMPEROR. AS ONLY YOU HAD FORESEEN, THEY ARE AT LONG LAST PROCEEDING! OUR PROBING INDICATES THAT THE LEGIONNAIRES ARE REGROUPING!

ARE THEY? THEN THE TIME FOR THESE PLEASANT DIVERSIONS IS PAST.

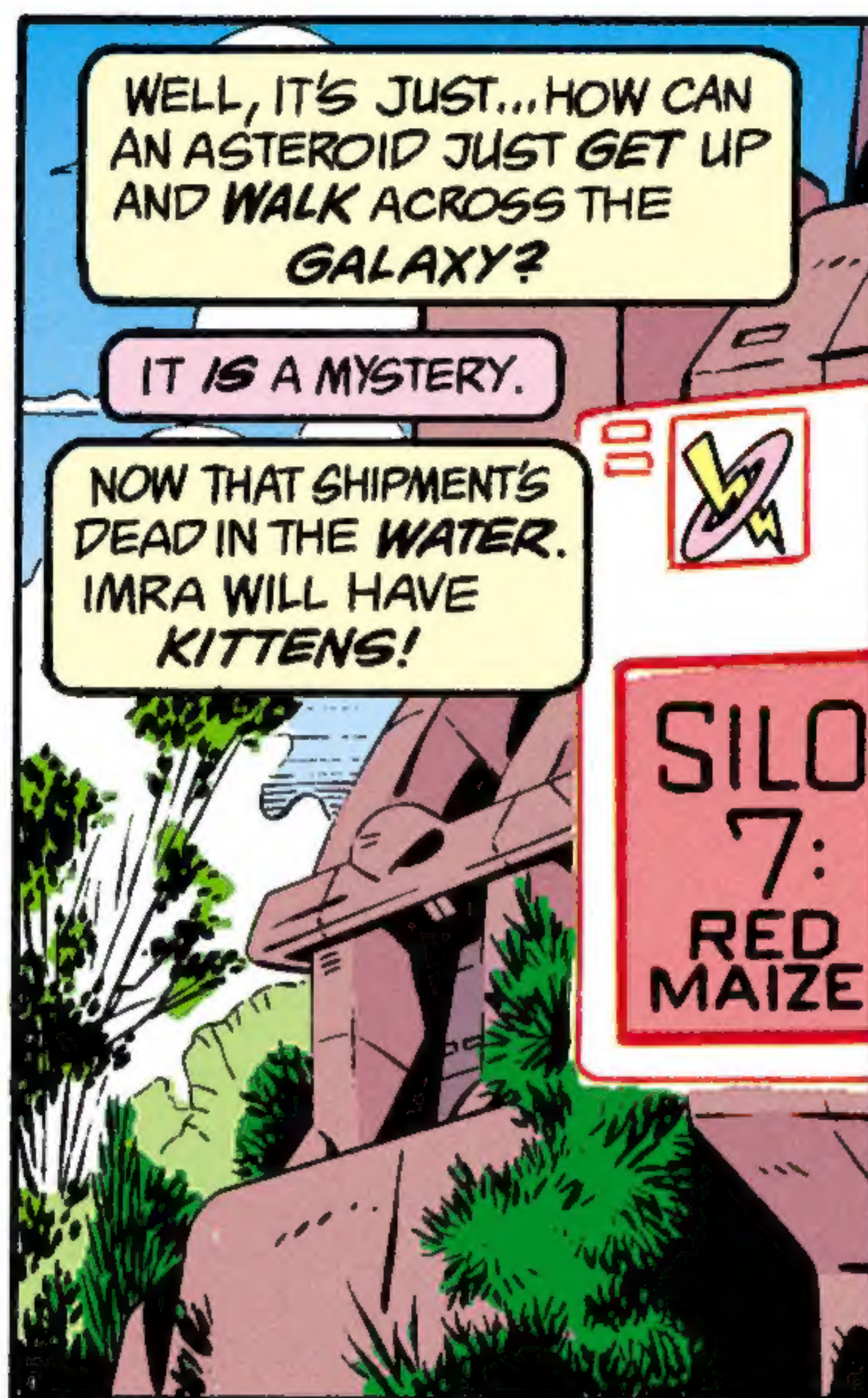




WINATH...

DID THEY  
SAY HOW?

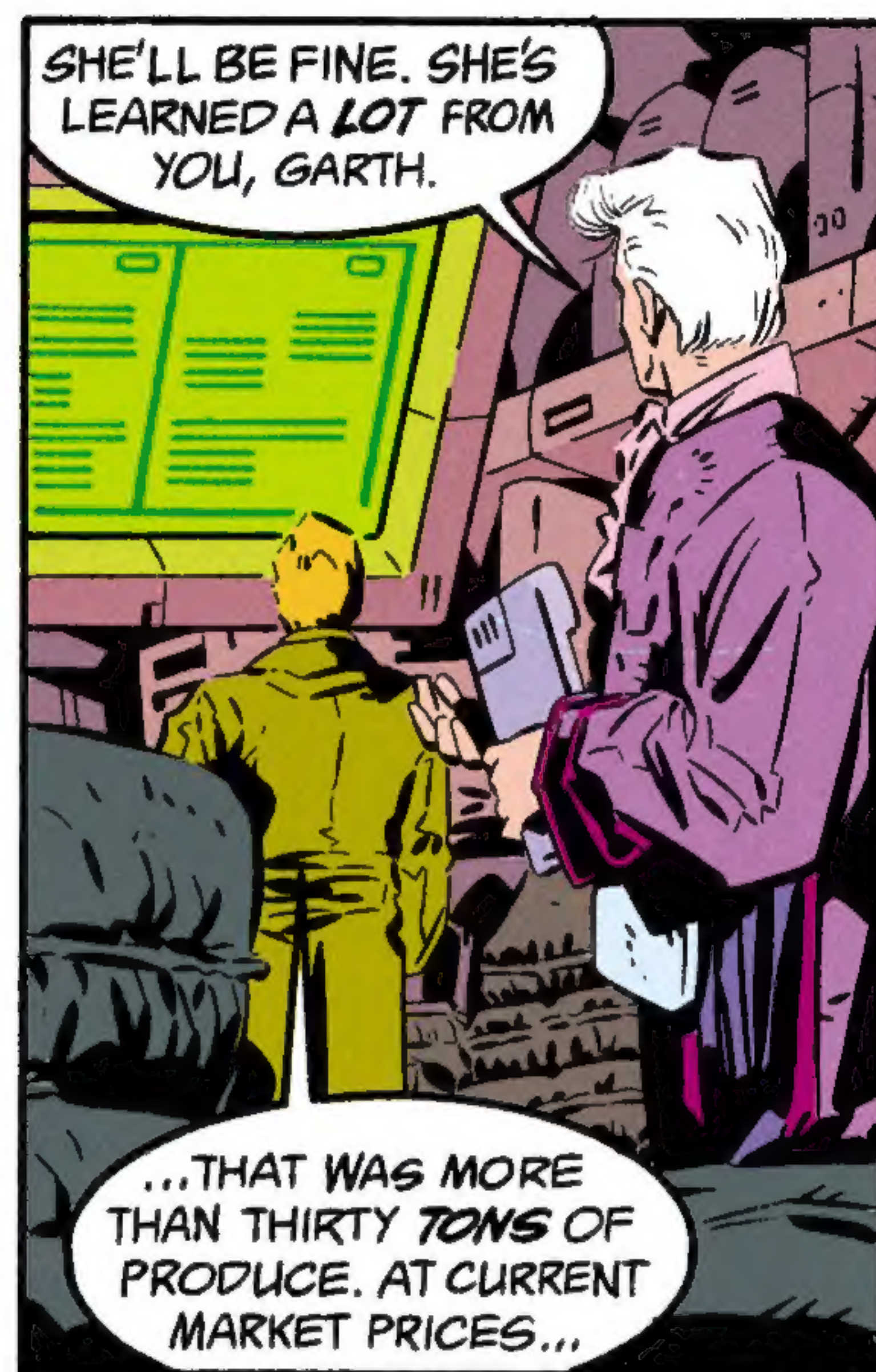
DOES IT MATTER?



WELL, IT'S JUST...HOW CAN  
AN ASTEROID JUST GET UP  
AND WALK ACROSS THE  
GALAXY?

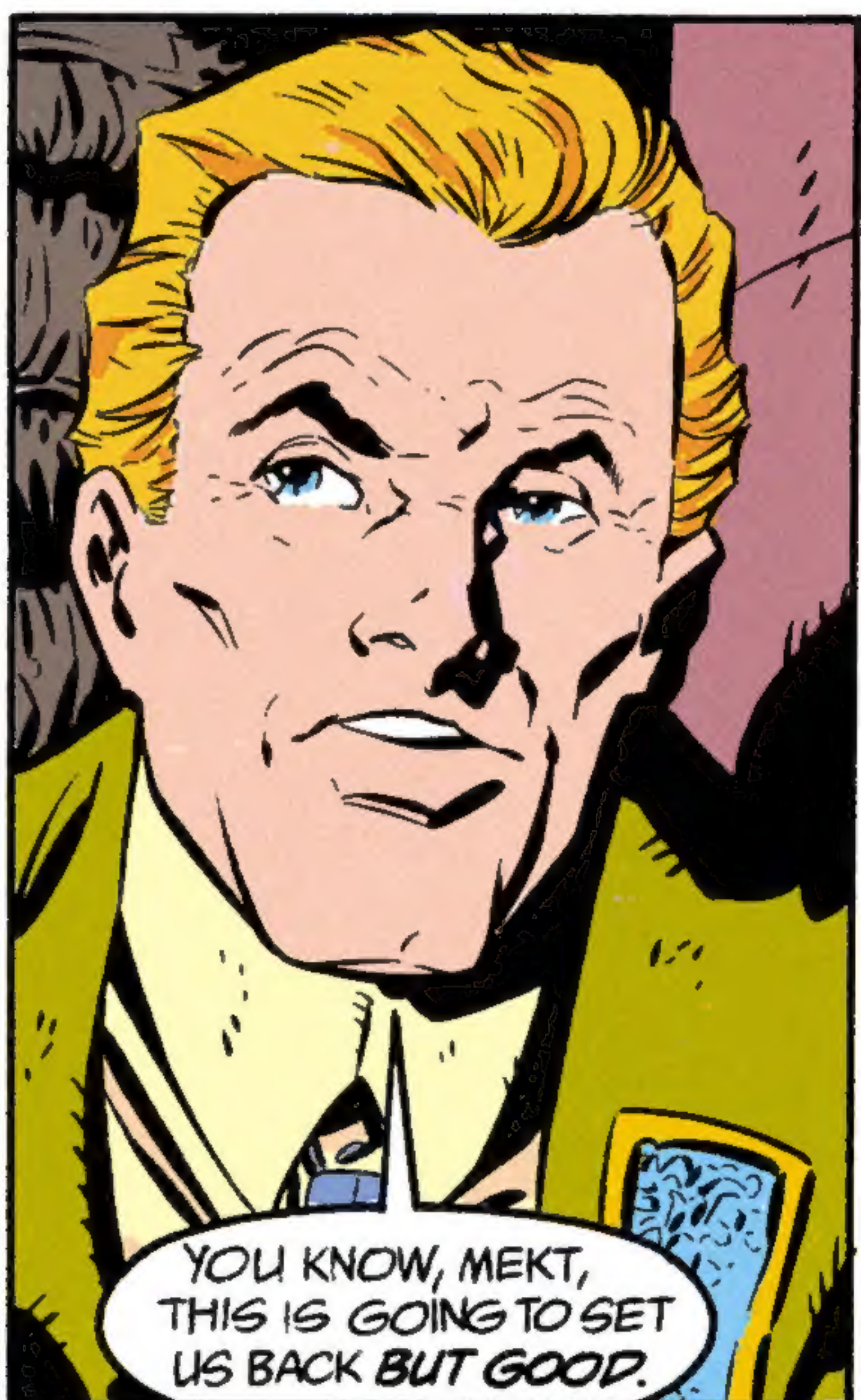
IT IS A MYSTERY.

NOW THAT SHIPMENT'S  
DEAD IN THE WATER.  
IMRA WILL HAVE  
KITTENS!

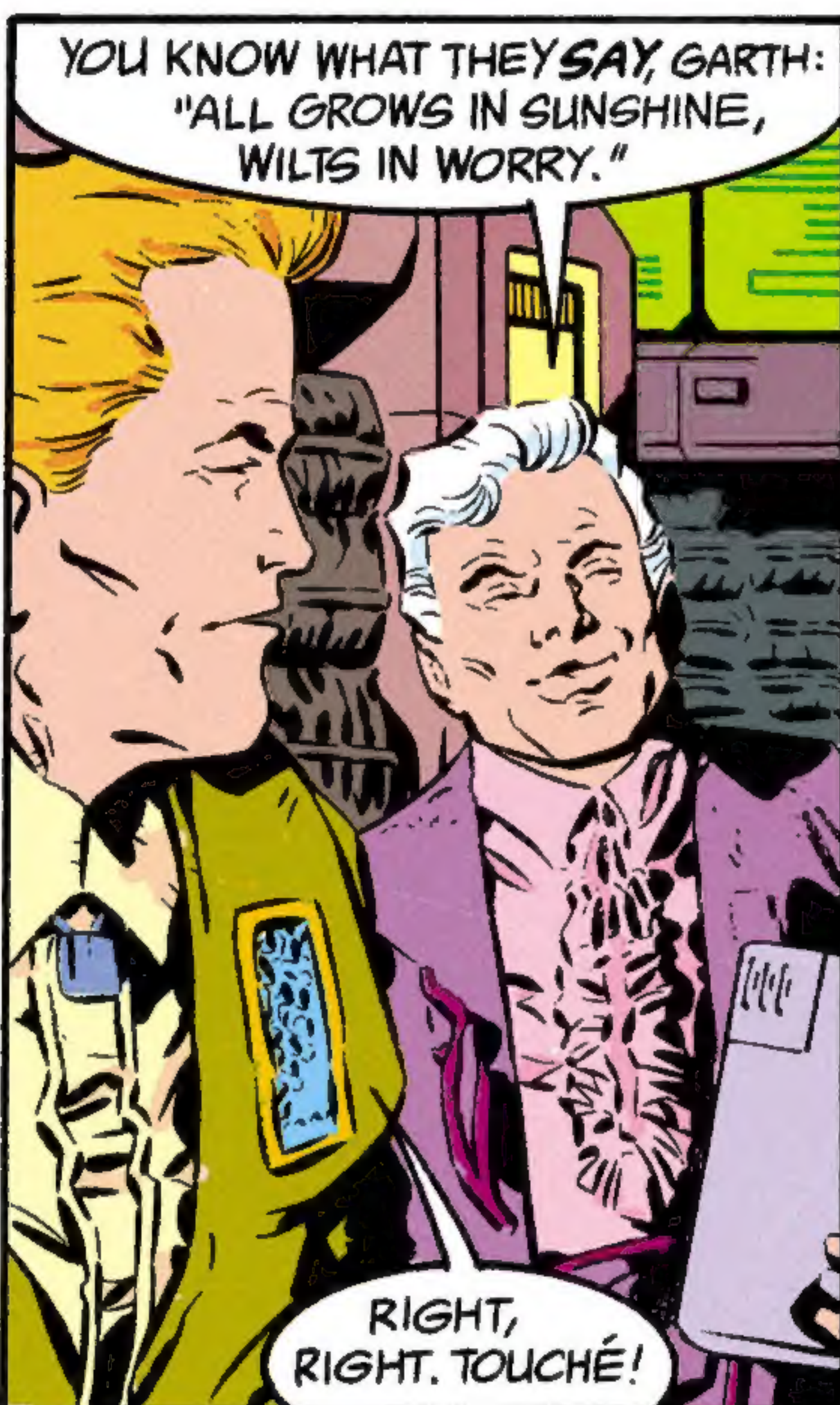


SHE'LL BE FINE. SHE'S  
LEARNED A LOT FROM  
YOU, GARTH.

...THAT WAS MORE  
THAN THIRTY TONS OF  
PRODUCE. AT CURRENT  
MARKET PRICES...



YOU KNOW, MEKT,  
THIS IS GOING TO SET  
US BACK BUT GOOD.



YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY, GARTH:  
"ALL GROWS IN SUNSHINE,  
WILTS IN WORRY."

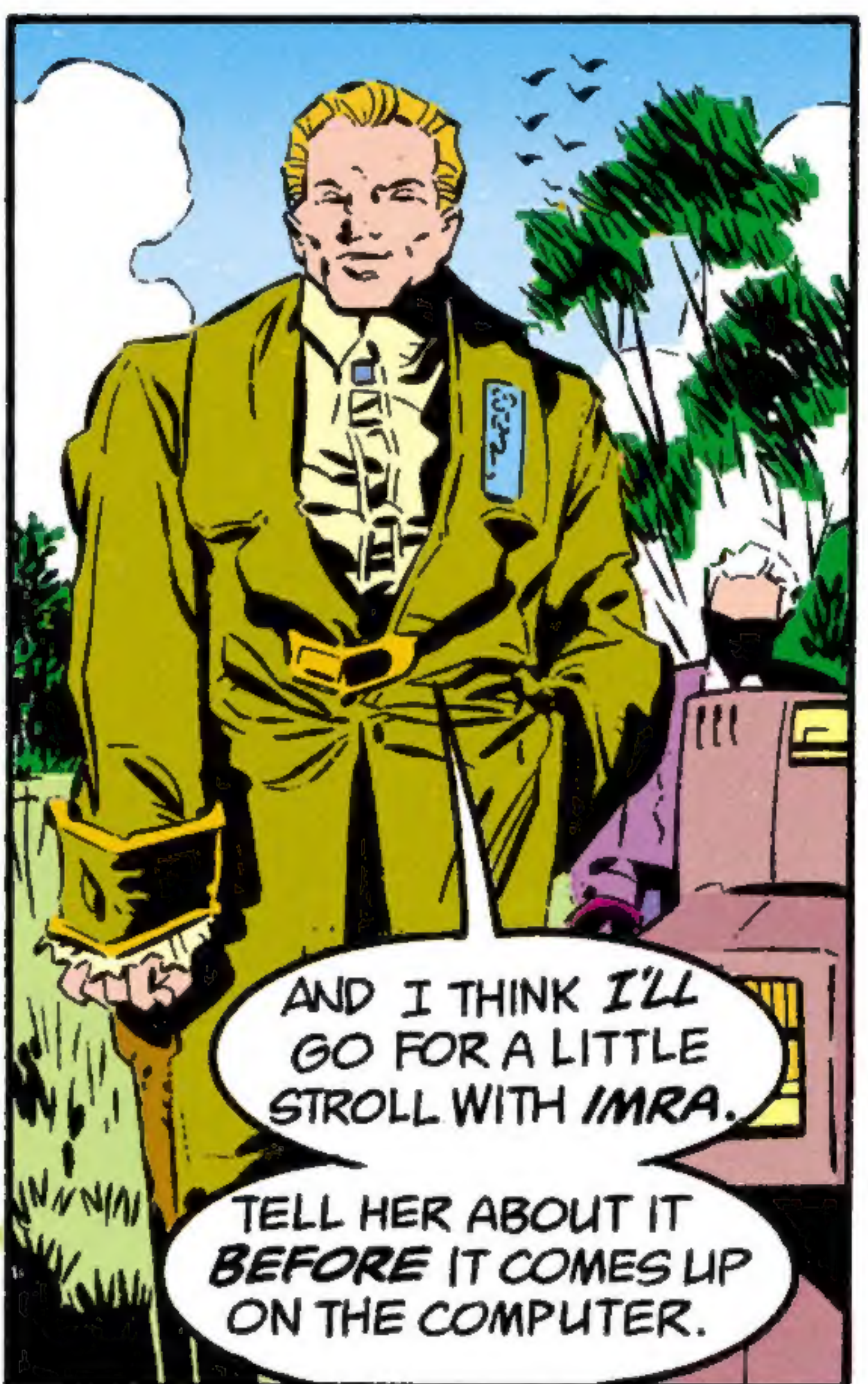
RIGHT,  
RIGHT. TOUCHÉ!



WE'LL MAKE THE  
BEST OF IT.

PROBABLY SOMEBODY  
OUT THERE NEEDS THIS  
PRODUCE **MORE** THAN  
THAT ASTEROID.

WE'LL  
FIND  
'EM.



AND I THINK I'LL  
GO FOR A LITTLE  
STROLL WITH IMRA.

TELL HER ABOUT IT  
BEFORE IT COMES UP  
ON THE COMPUTER.



WE'LL HAVE IT WORKED OUT  
BY THE TIME YOU GET BACK!

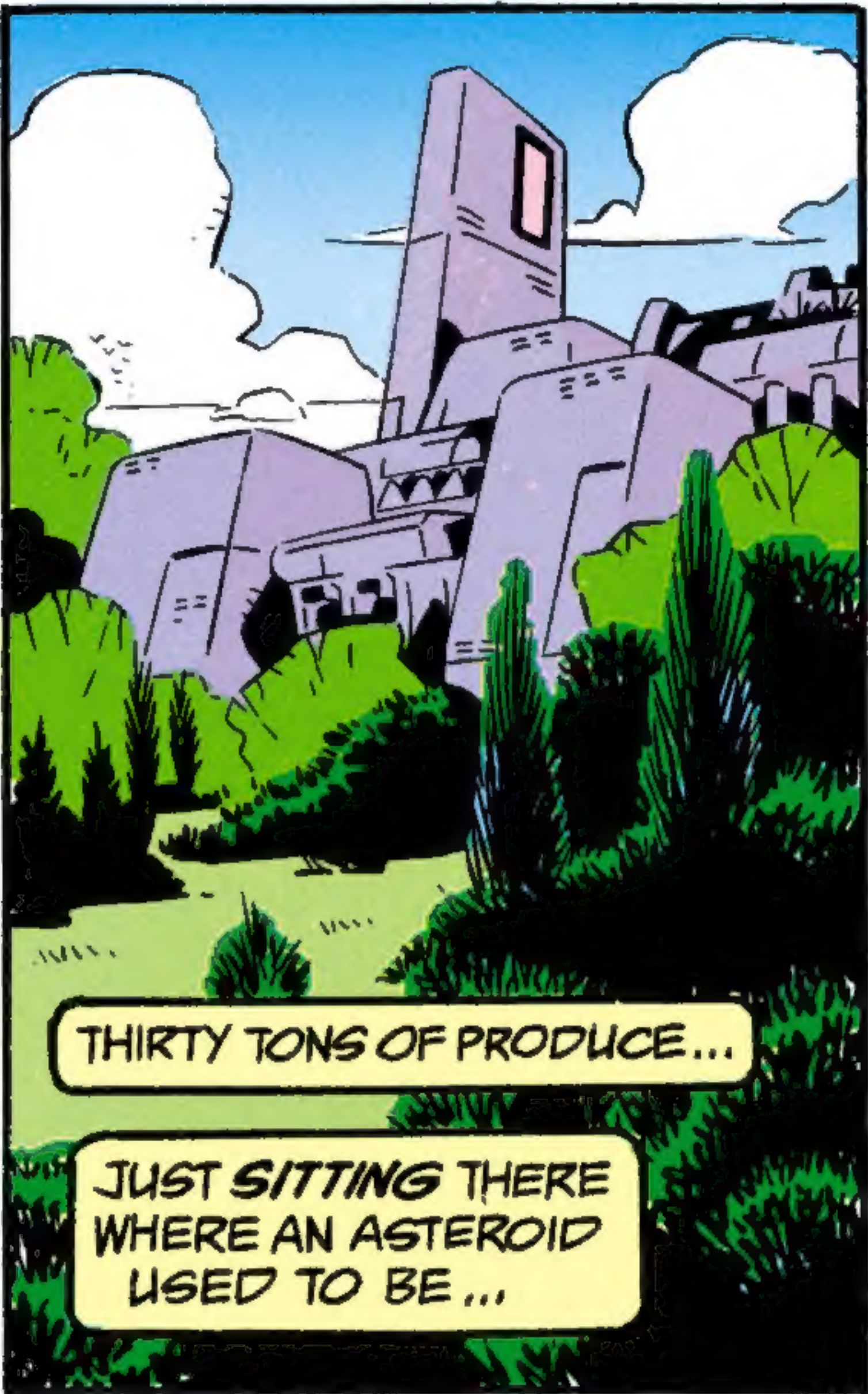
WELL,  
SEE WHAT  
YOU CAN  
DO.



HMM. WE CAN ALWAYS GET  
MARKET PRICES FOR THE  
QUATRO ON TOONAR...

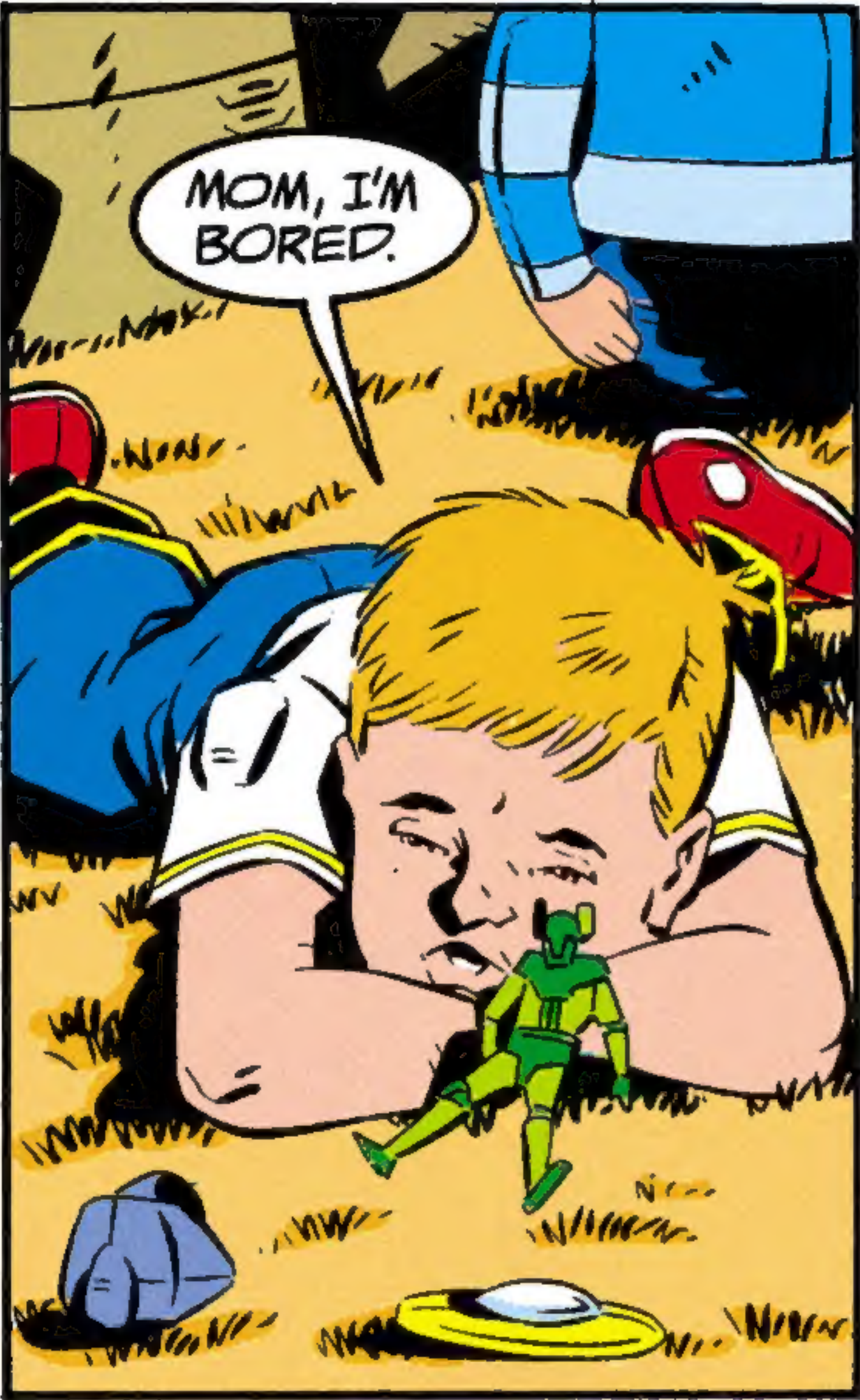
AND XANTHU IS  
ONLY TWO DAYS'  
TRAVEL FROM THERE.



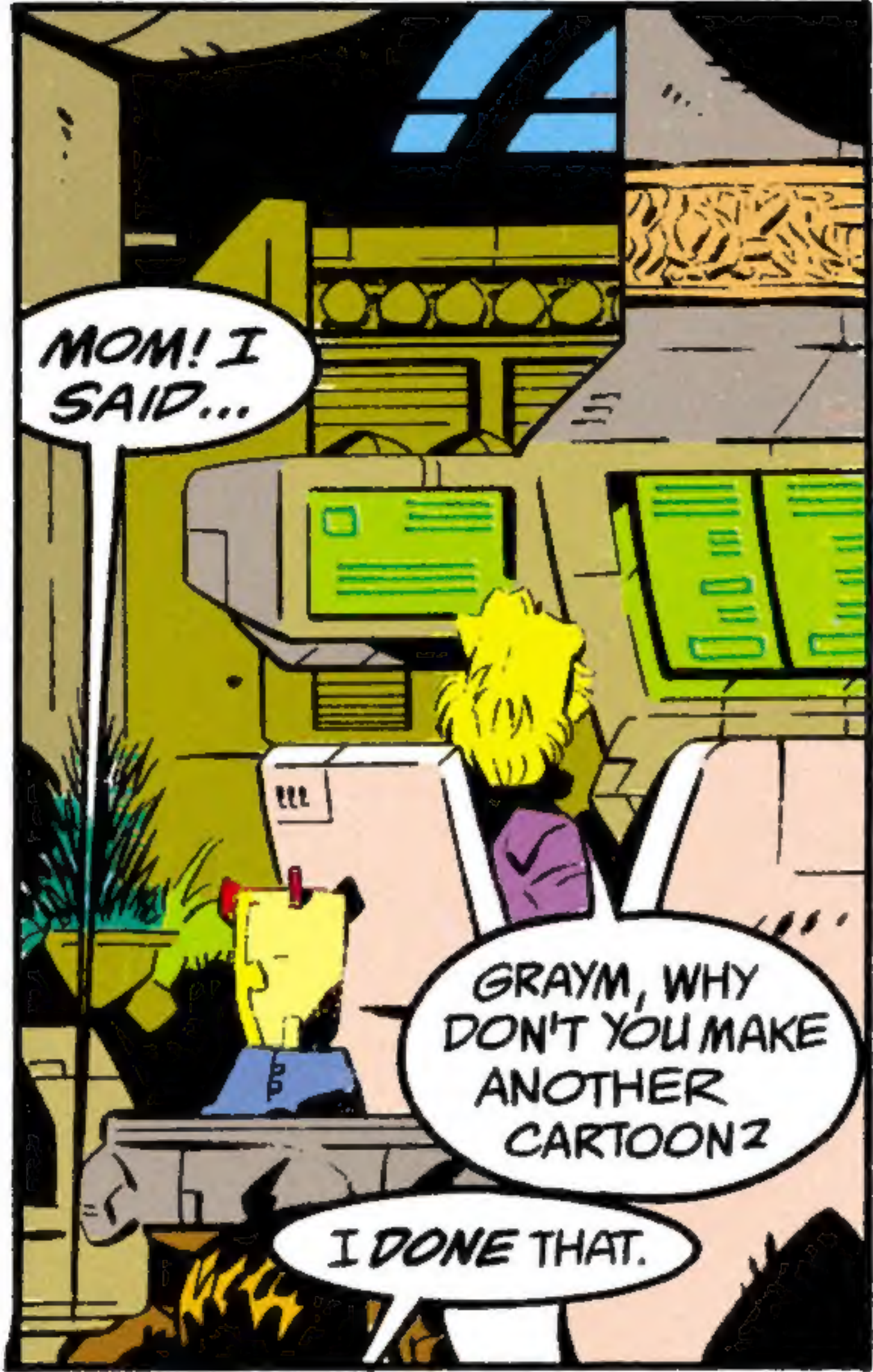


THIRTY TONS OF PRODUCE...

JUST *SITTING* THERE  
WHERE AN ASTEROID  
USED TO BE...



MOM, I'M  
BORED.



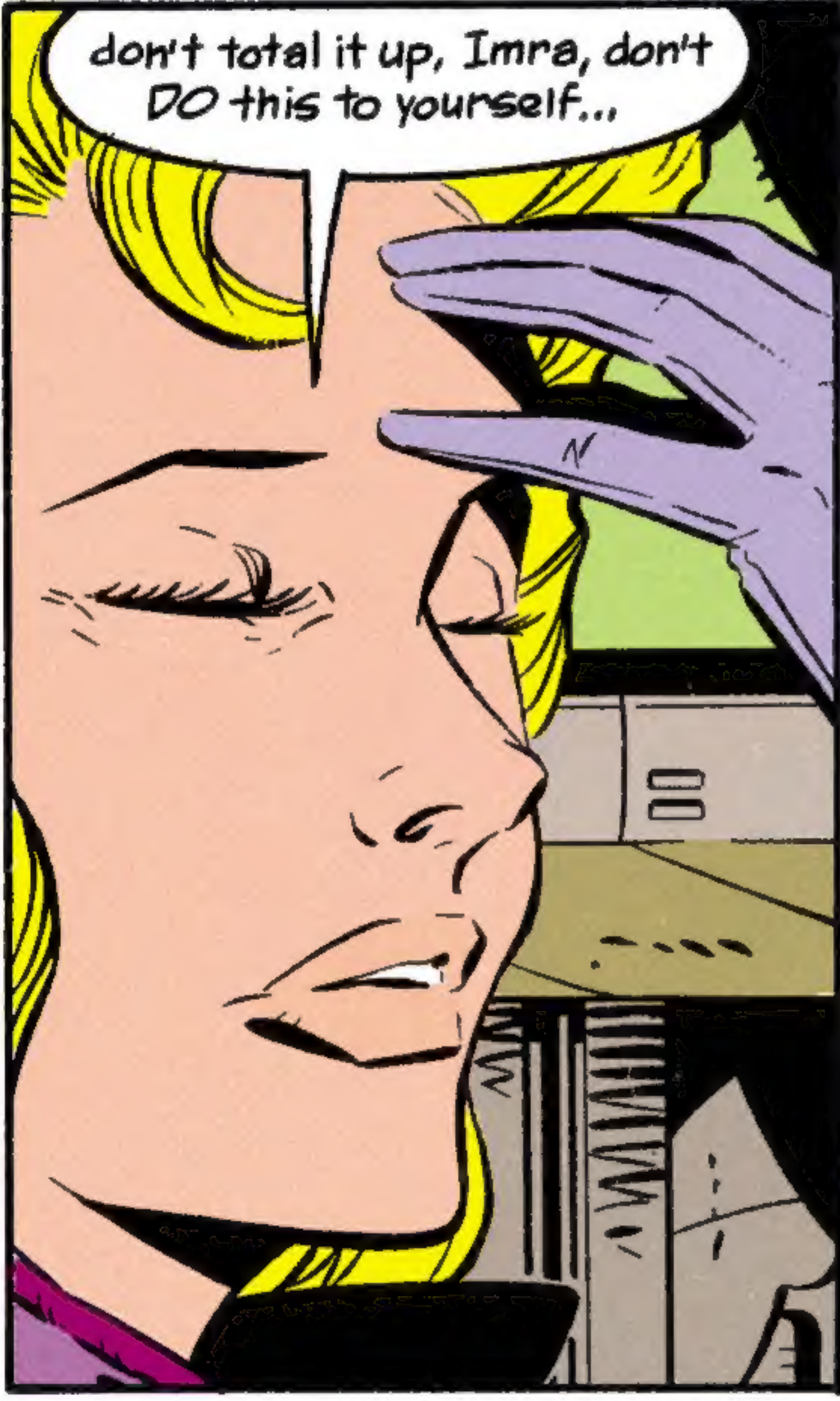
MOM! I  
SAID...

GRAYM, WHY  
DON'T YOU MAKE  
ANOTHER  
CARTOON?

I DONE THAT.

**DID THAT, DEAR.**

<u>RED MAIZE</u>	5.5 TONS 11,600 CREDITS
<u>G. BEANS</u>	5 TONS 12,550 CREDITS
<u>Z. CARROTS</u>	2.5 TONS 7,775 CREDITS
<u>L. BEANS</u>	2 TONS 2,500 CREDITS
<u>SWEETPEAS</u>	2 TONS 5,000 CREDITS
<u>GOLDENMELON</u>	1.5 TONS 1,100 CREDITS



don't total it up, Imra, don't  
DO this to yourself...

TOTAL

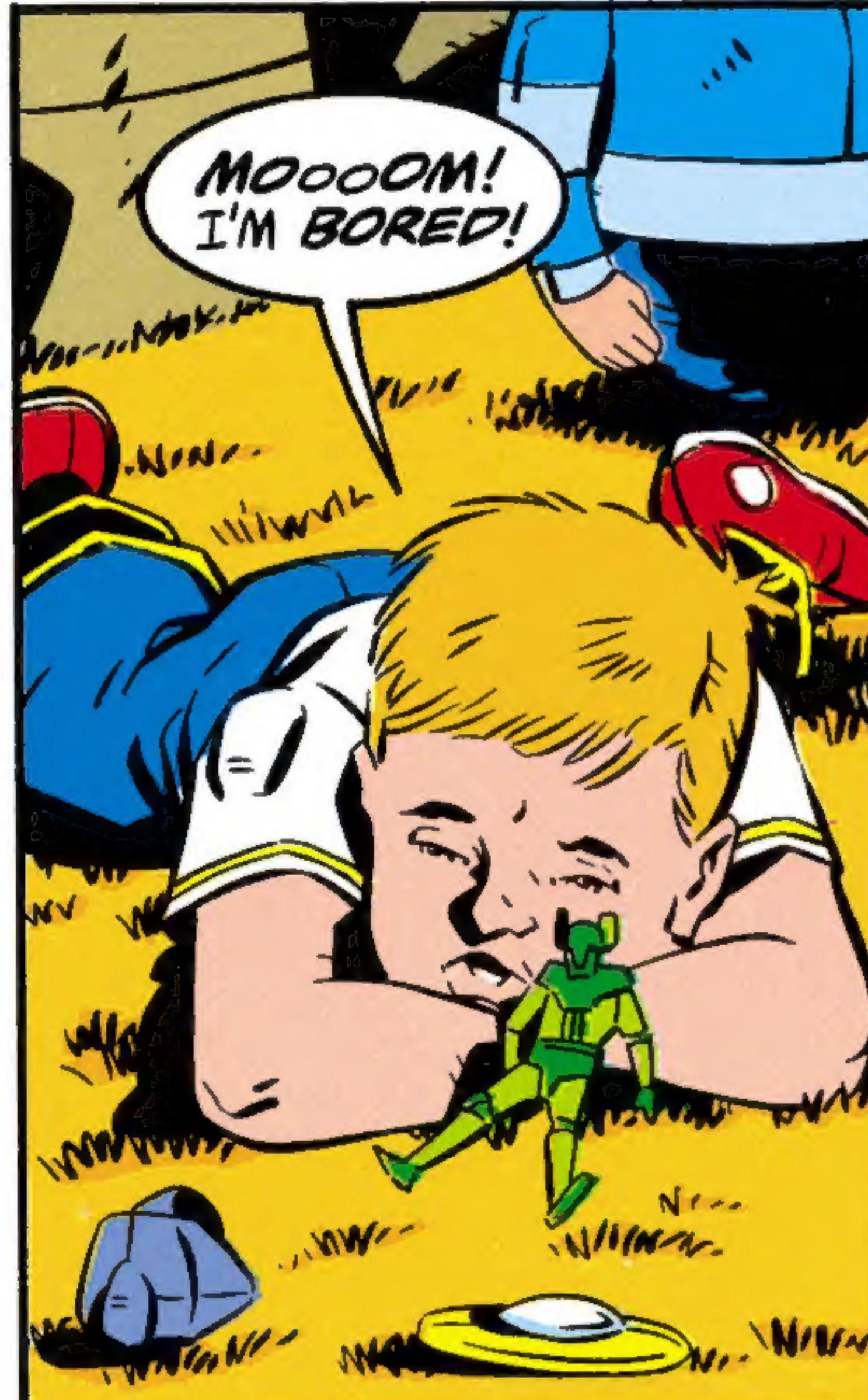
63,650 CREDITS



SIXTY-THREE  
THOU--!

"ALL GROWS  
IN SUNSHINE, WILTS  
IN WORRY. ALL  
GROWS IN SUNSHINE,  
WILTS IN WORRY..."

IT'S NOT  
WORRRRING...



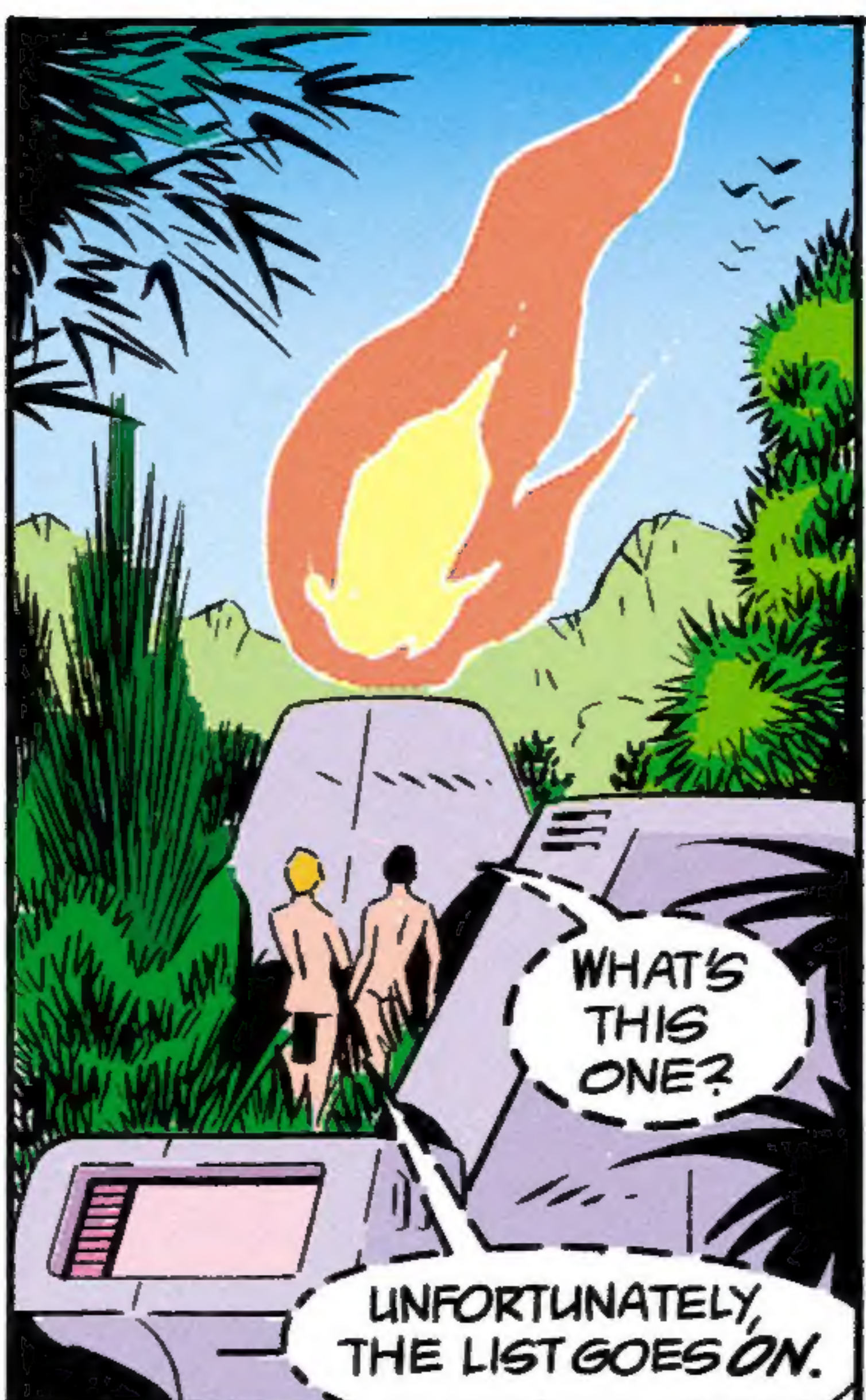
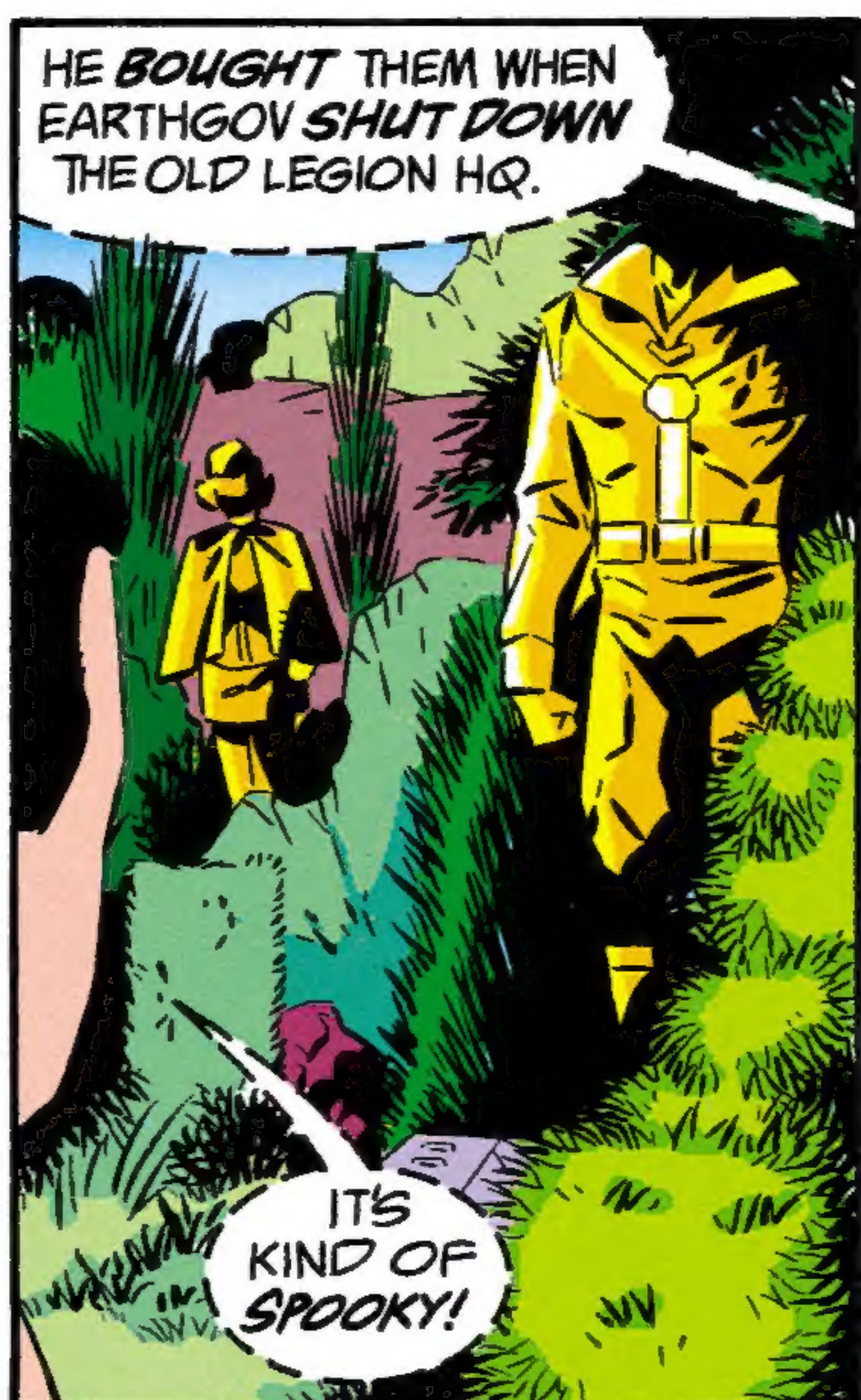
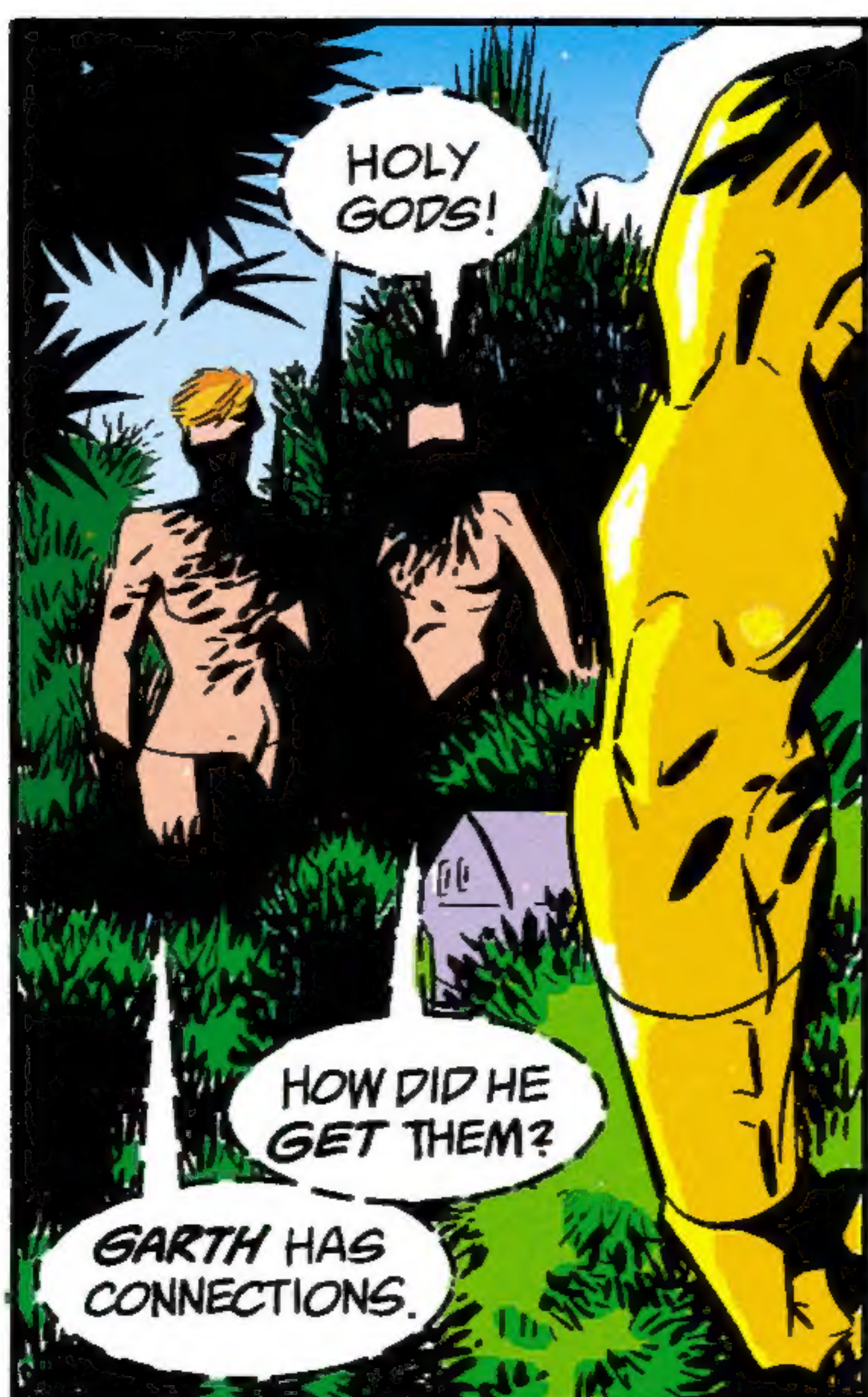
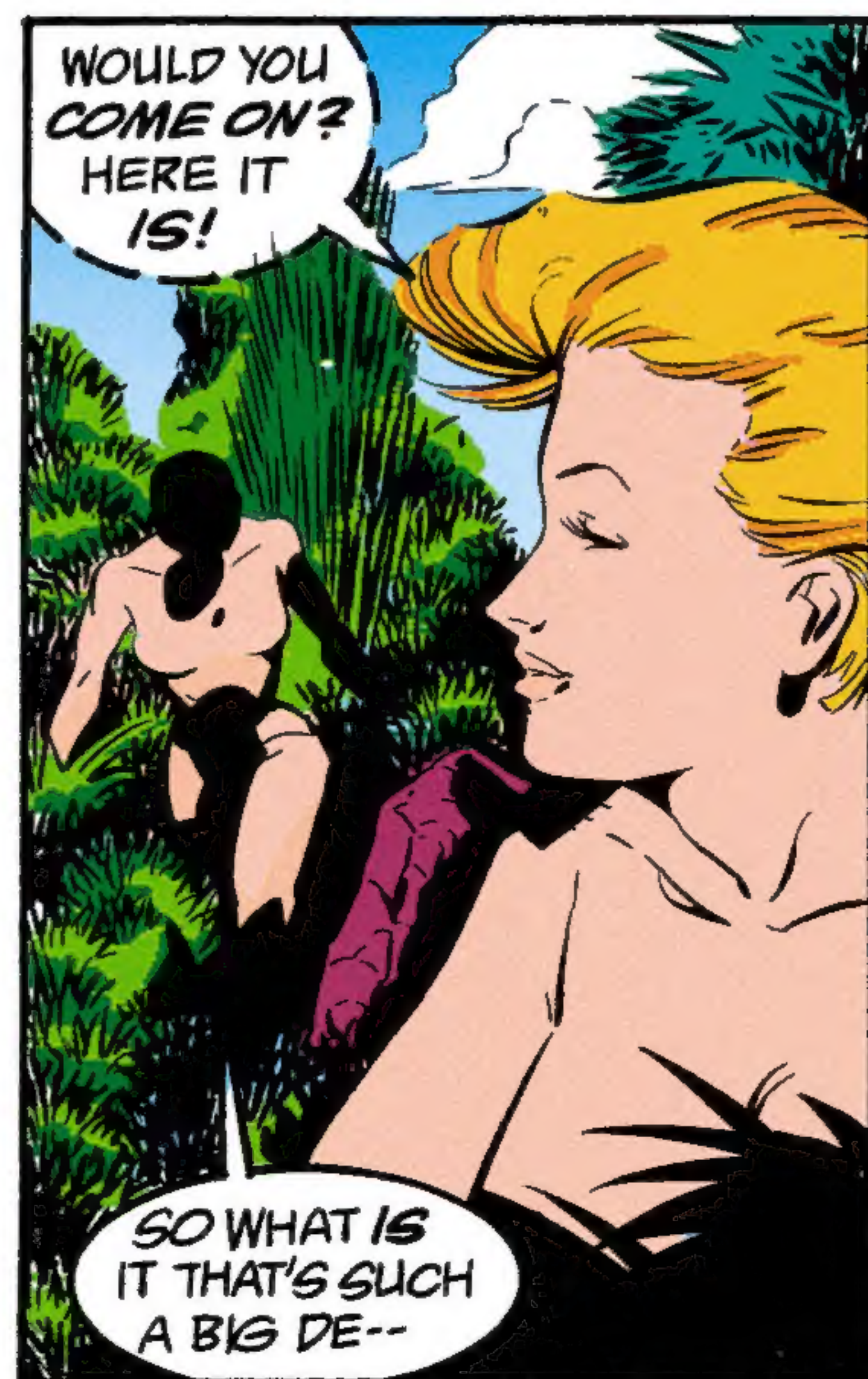
MOOOOM!  
I'M BORED!



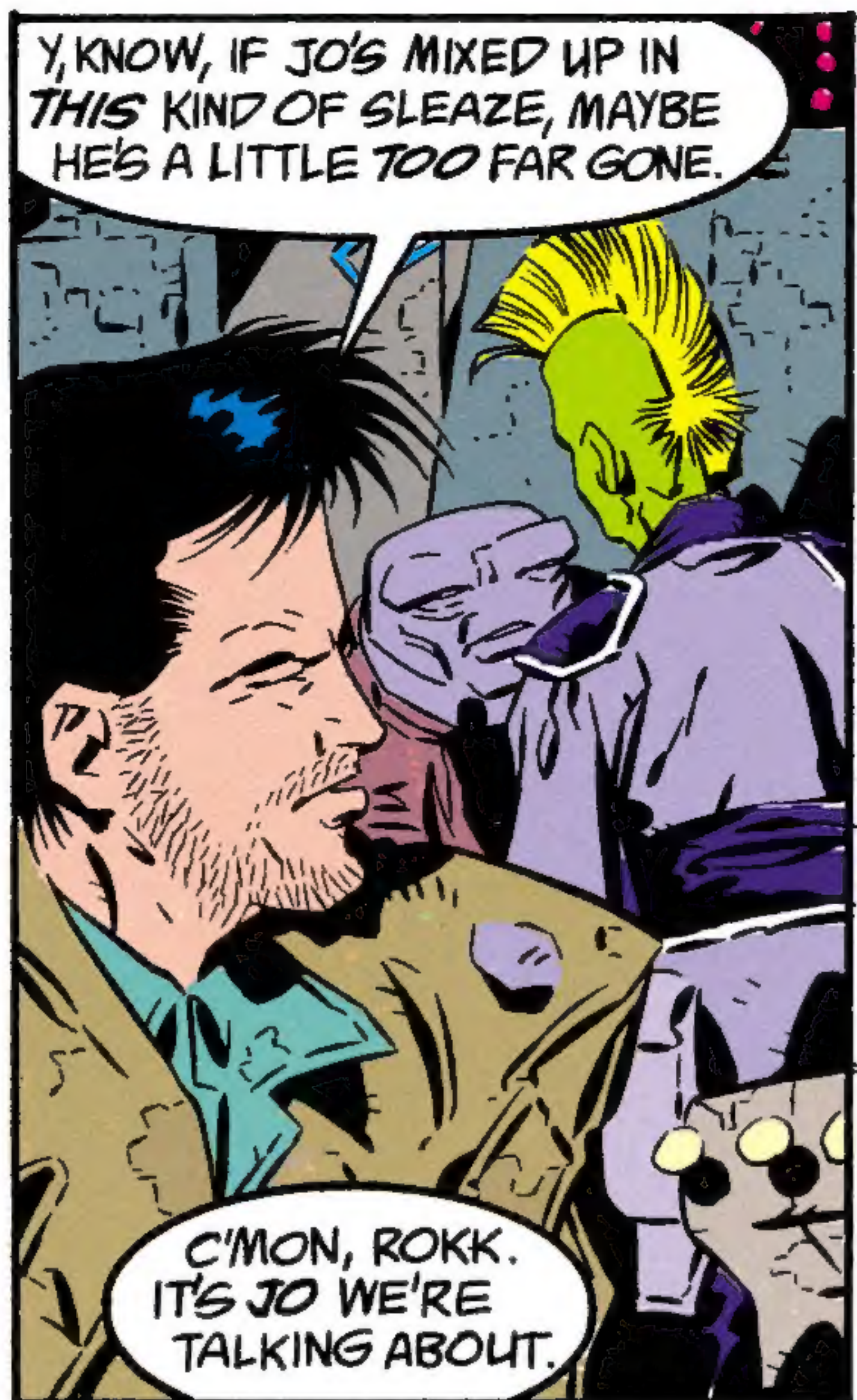
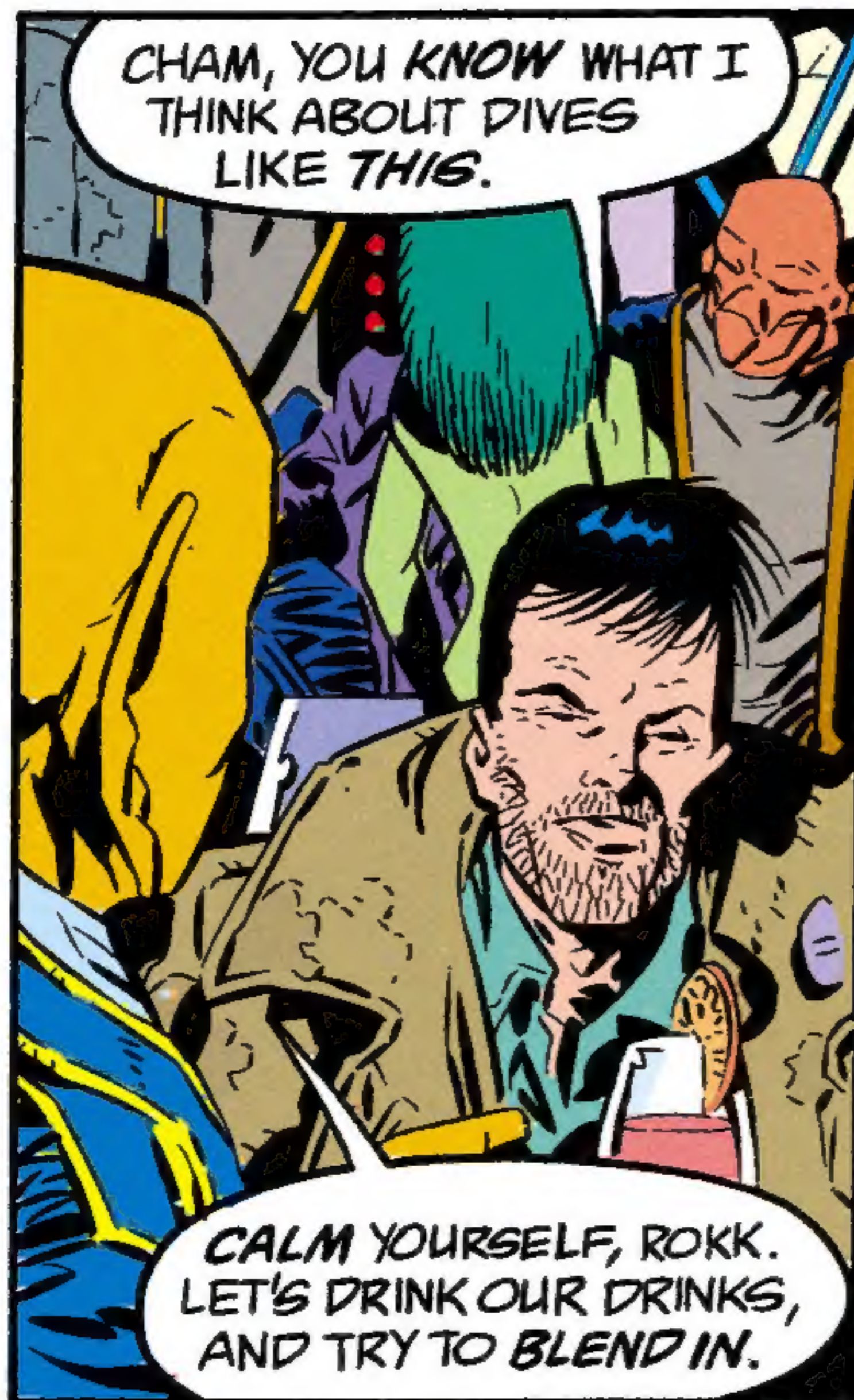
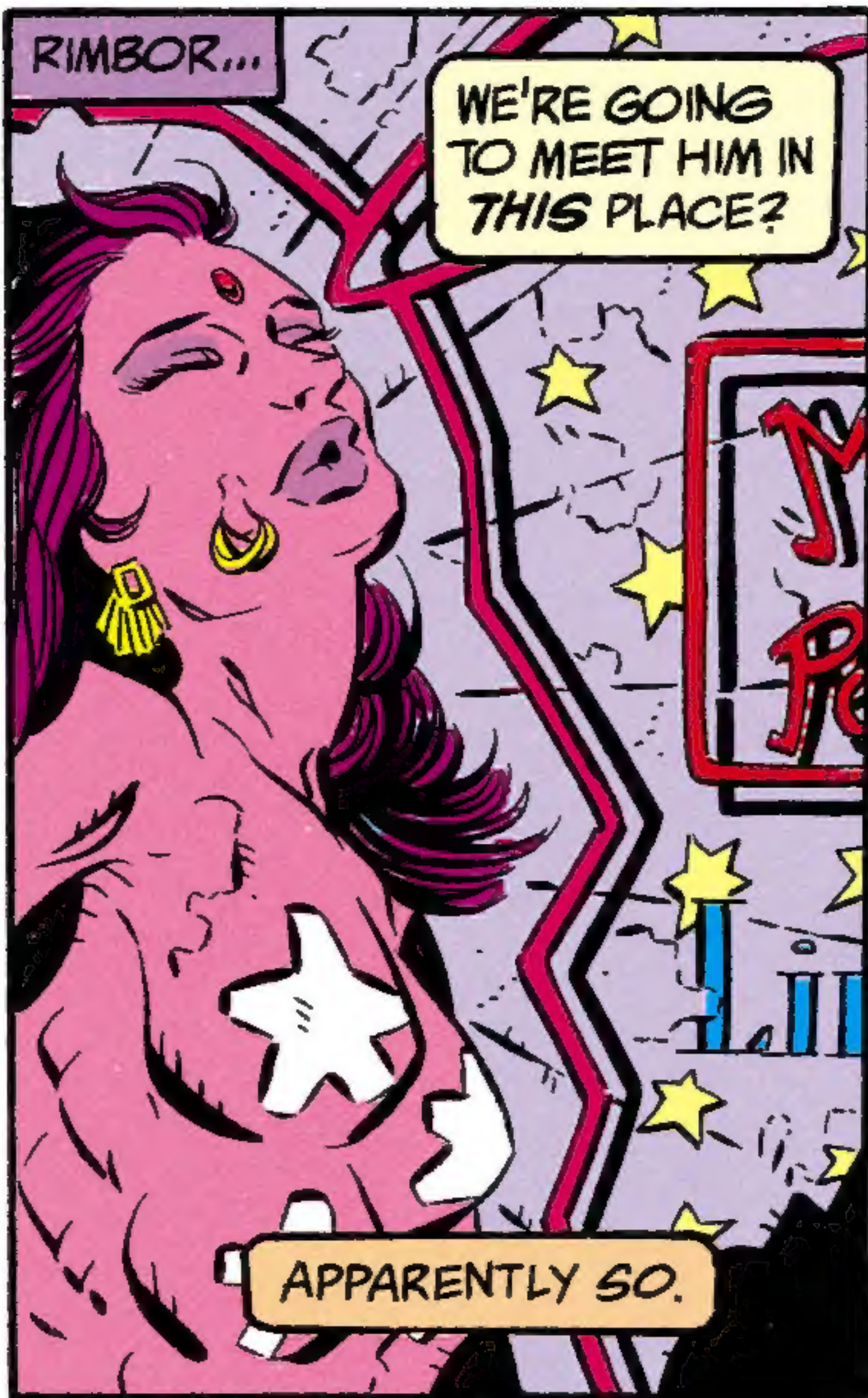
SIGH!

COME HERE,  
GRAYM. YOUR MOMMY  
NEEDS A HUG.

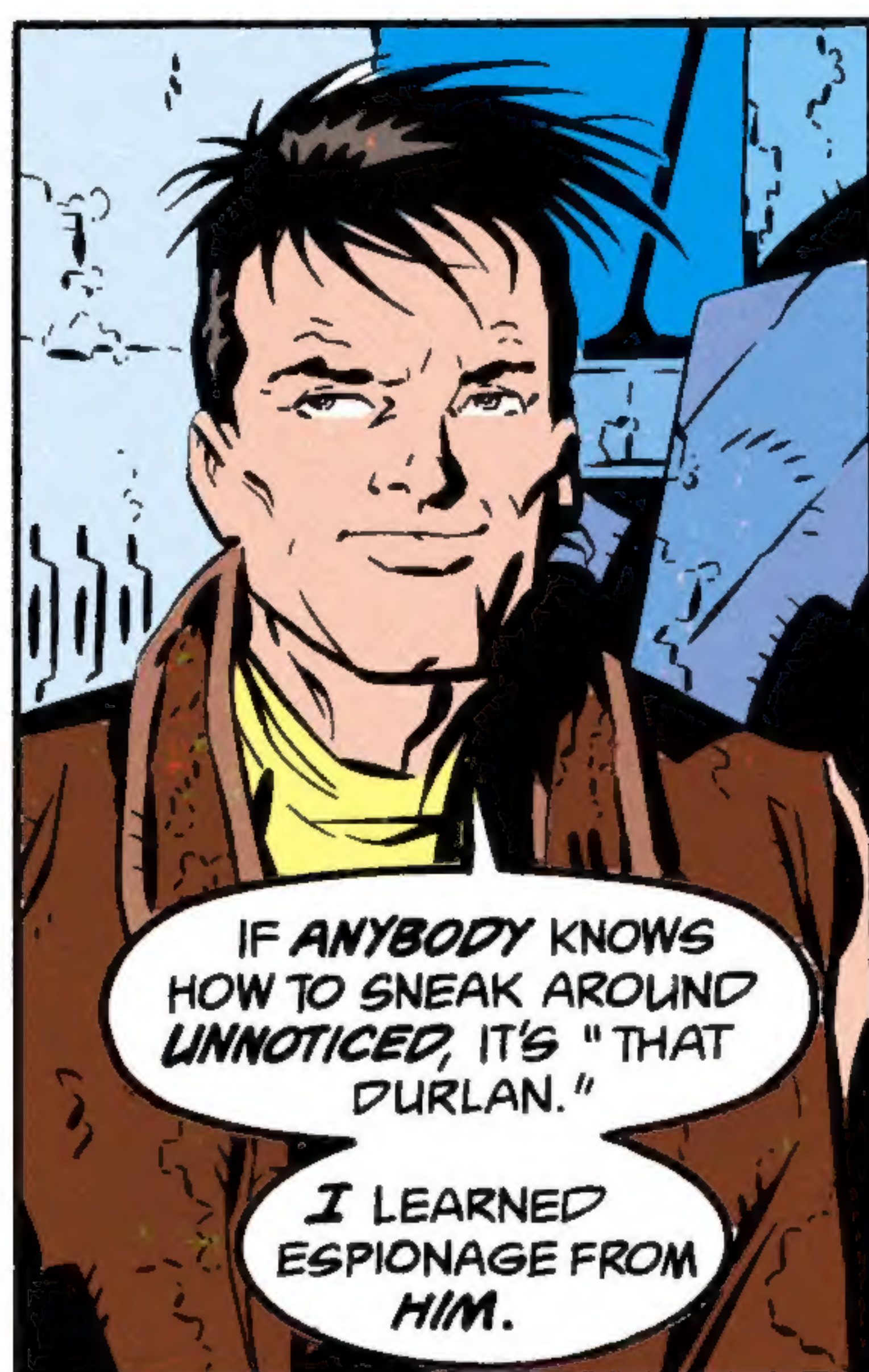
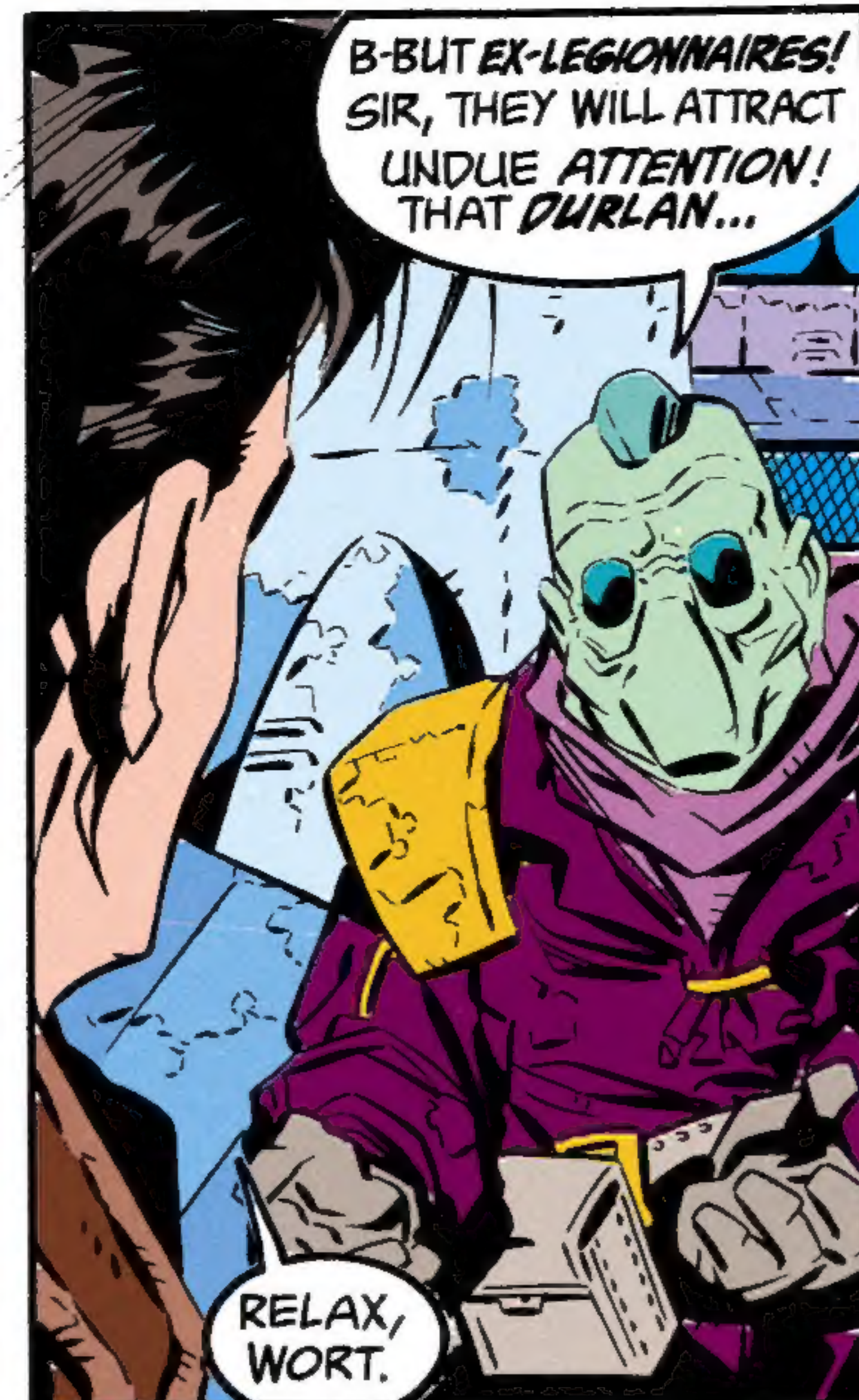
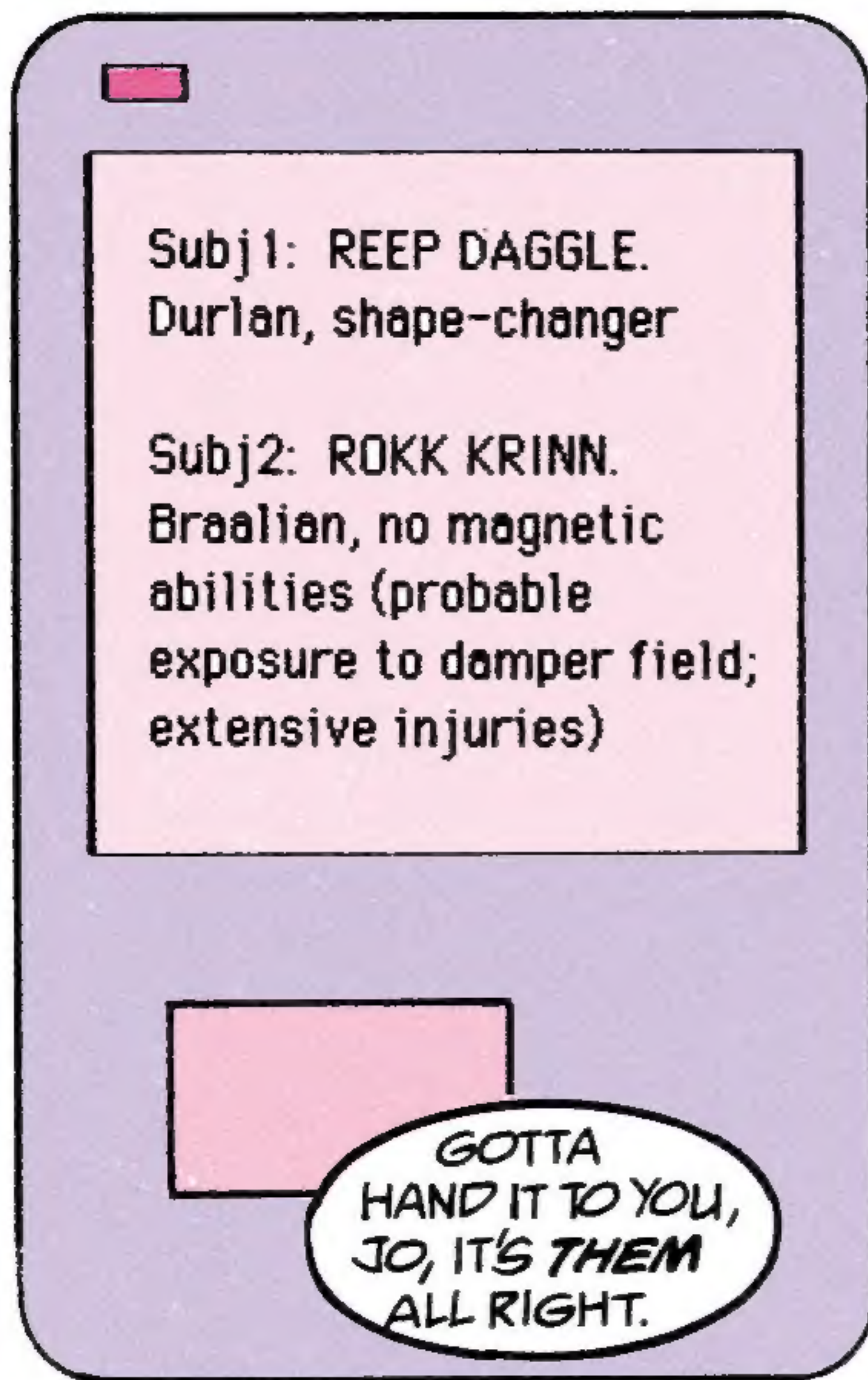
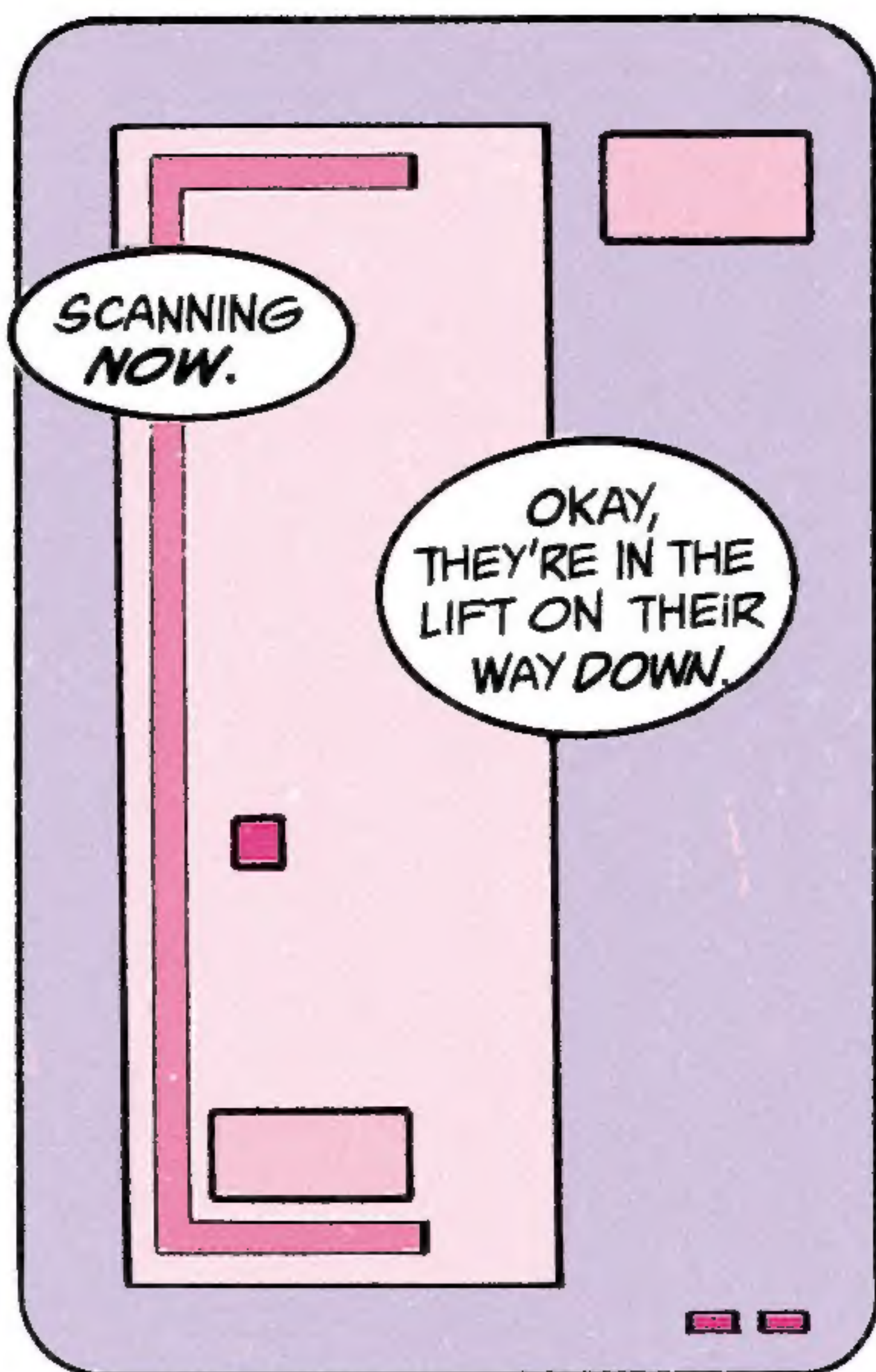




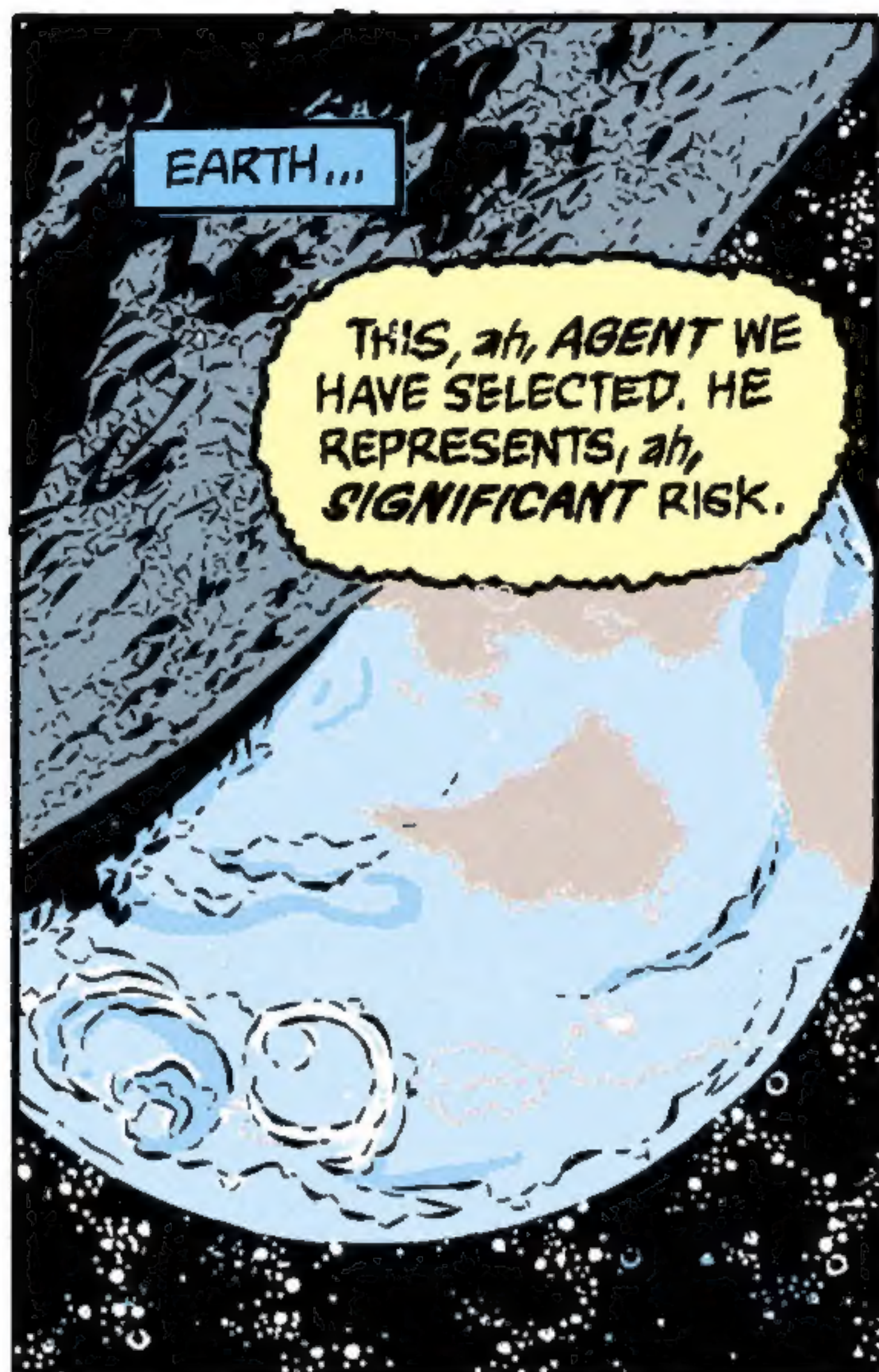






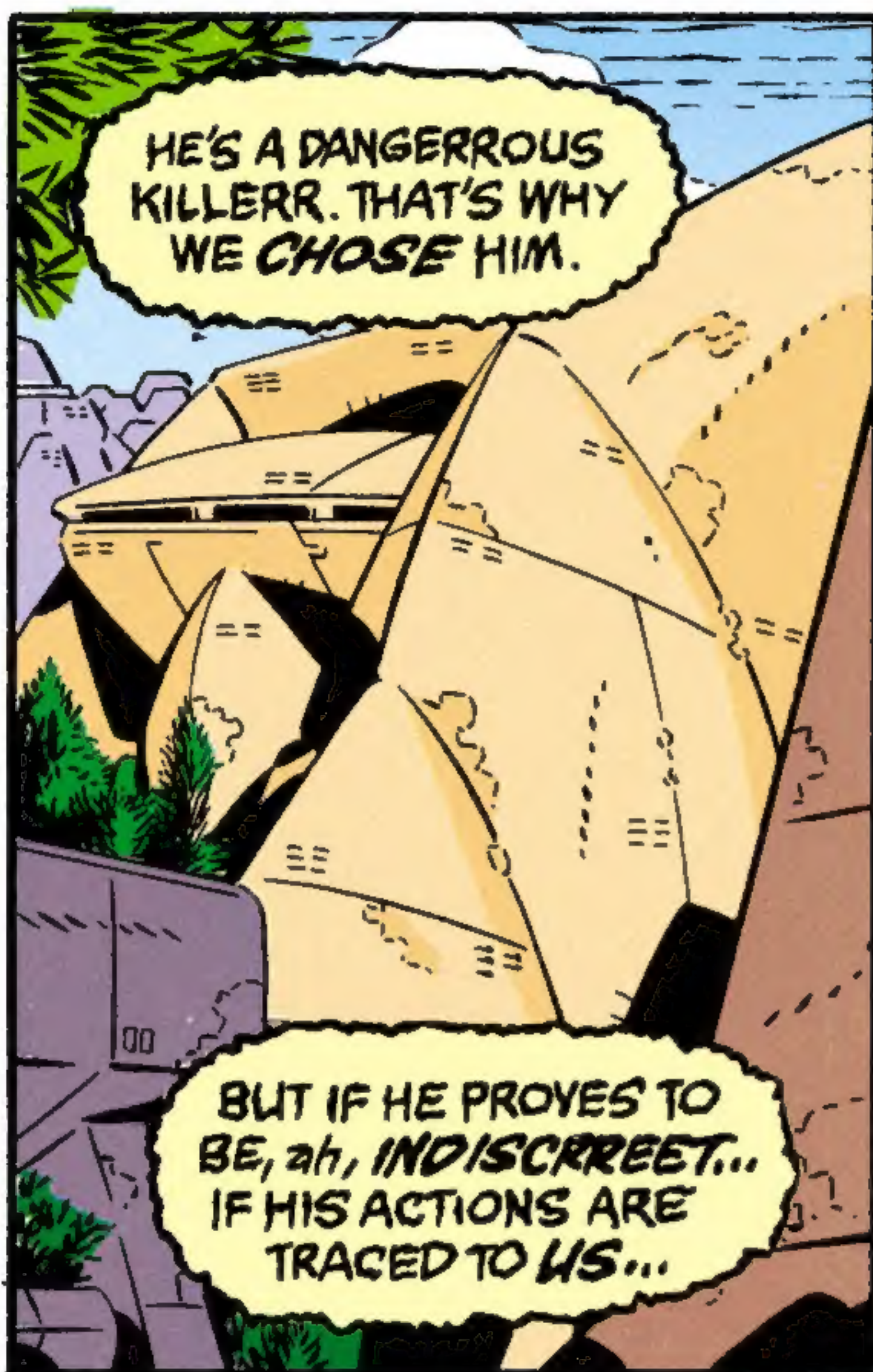






EARTH...

THIS, *ah*, AGENT WE HAVE SELECTED. HE REPRESENTS, *ah*, SIGNIFICANT RISK.



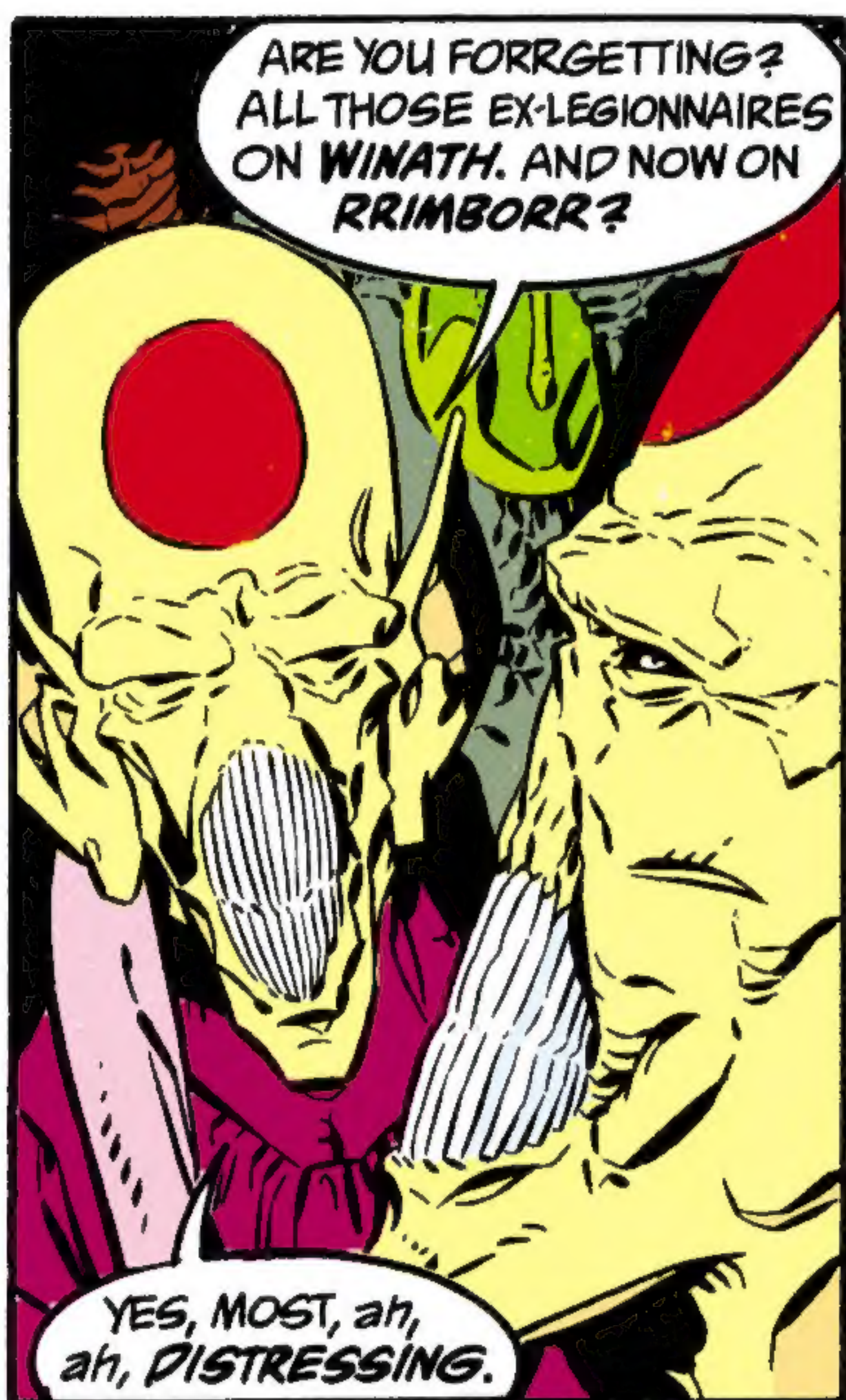
HE'S A DANGEROUS KILLER. THAT'S WHY WE *CHOSE* HIM.

BUT IF HE PROVES TO BE, *ah*, INDISCREET... IF HIS ACTIONS ARE TRACED TO US...



EVERY HUMANOID CAN BE CONTROLLED. THIS ONE IS NO DIFFERENT.

YOU HAVE NOT BEEN IN THE SAME ROOM WITH HIM. HE IS DIFFERENT.



ARE YOU FORGETTING? ALL THOSE EX-LEGIONNAIRES ON WINATH. AND NOW ON RIMBORR?

YES, MOST, *ah*, *ah*, DISTRESSING.



WHAT IF THEY WERE TO RREGROUP?

WE'VE FOUND PRECISELY THE INSTRUMENT TO SHATTER THEIR FRAGILE, *ah*, MORALE AT THIS CRITICAL POINT.



BY THE ONLY GOD, WE'VE WAITED A MILLENNIUM TO SEIZE THIS WORLD, CASTE BROTHER.

WE WILL NOT RISK ALLOWING THE LEGION TO RE-FORM.

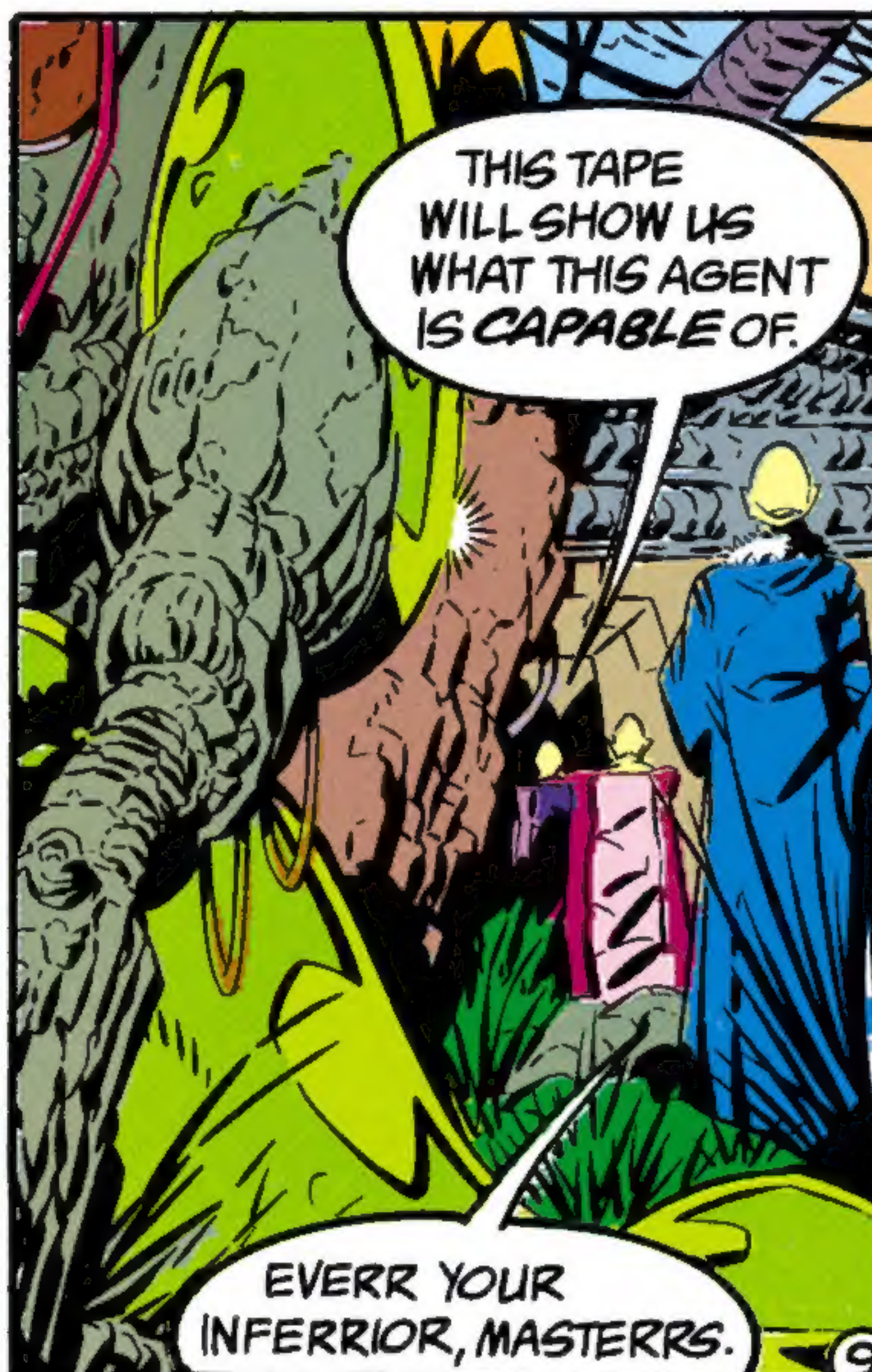


WE WILL NOT RISK THEIR EXPOSING OUR PRESENCE HERRE.

PLEASE EXCUSE ME, MASTERS, BUT, *ah*, HIS RREPORT HAS ARRIVED.



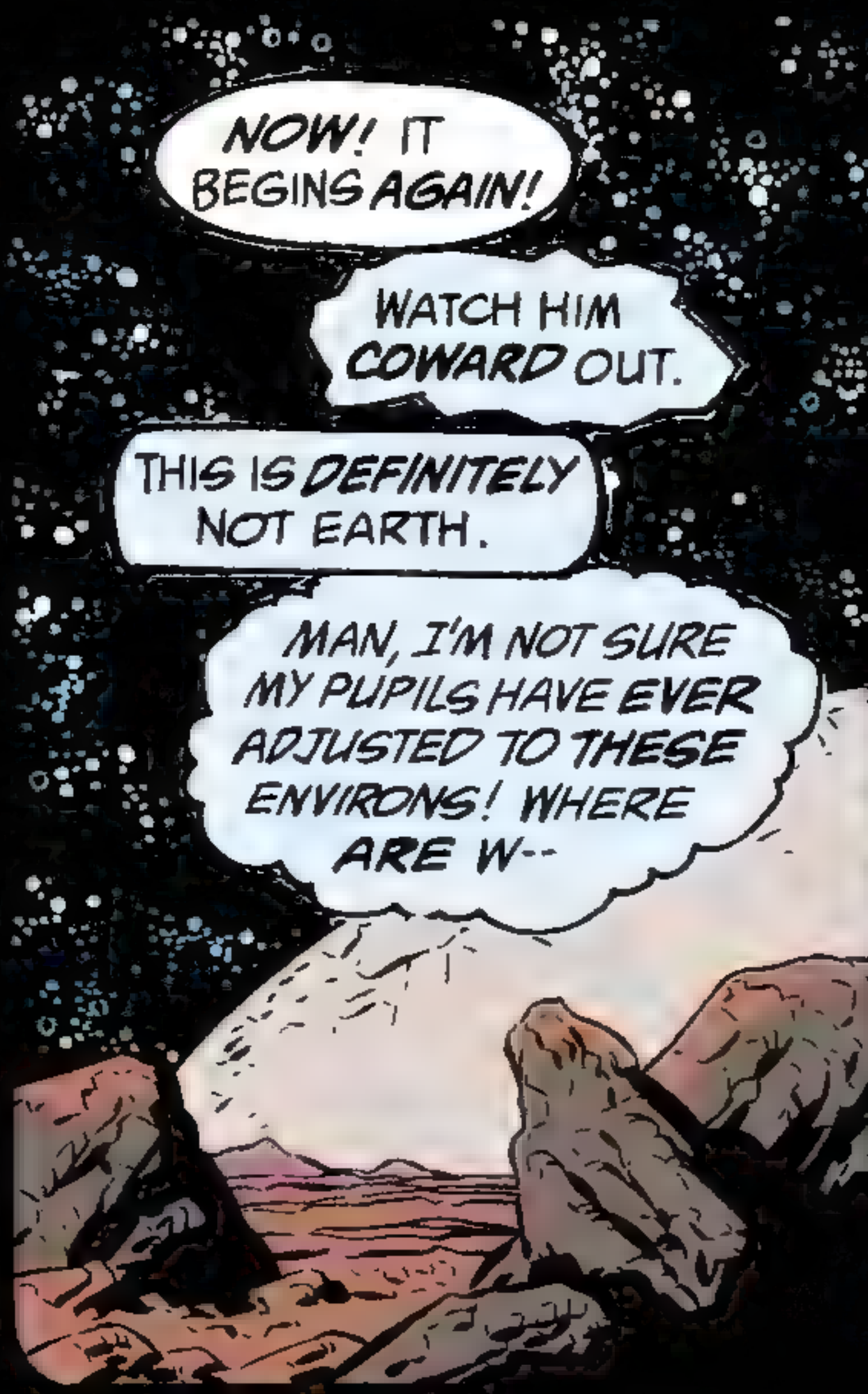
AT LAST! NOW THE TALE WILL BE TOLD!



THIS TAPE WILL SHOW US WHAT THIS AGENT IS CAPABLE OF.

EVERR YOUR INFERRIOR, MASTERRS.





NOW! IT  
BEGINNING AGAIN!

WATCH HIM  
COWARD OUT.

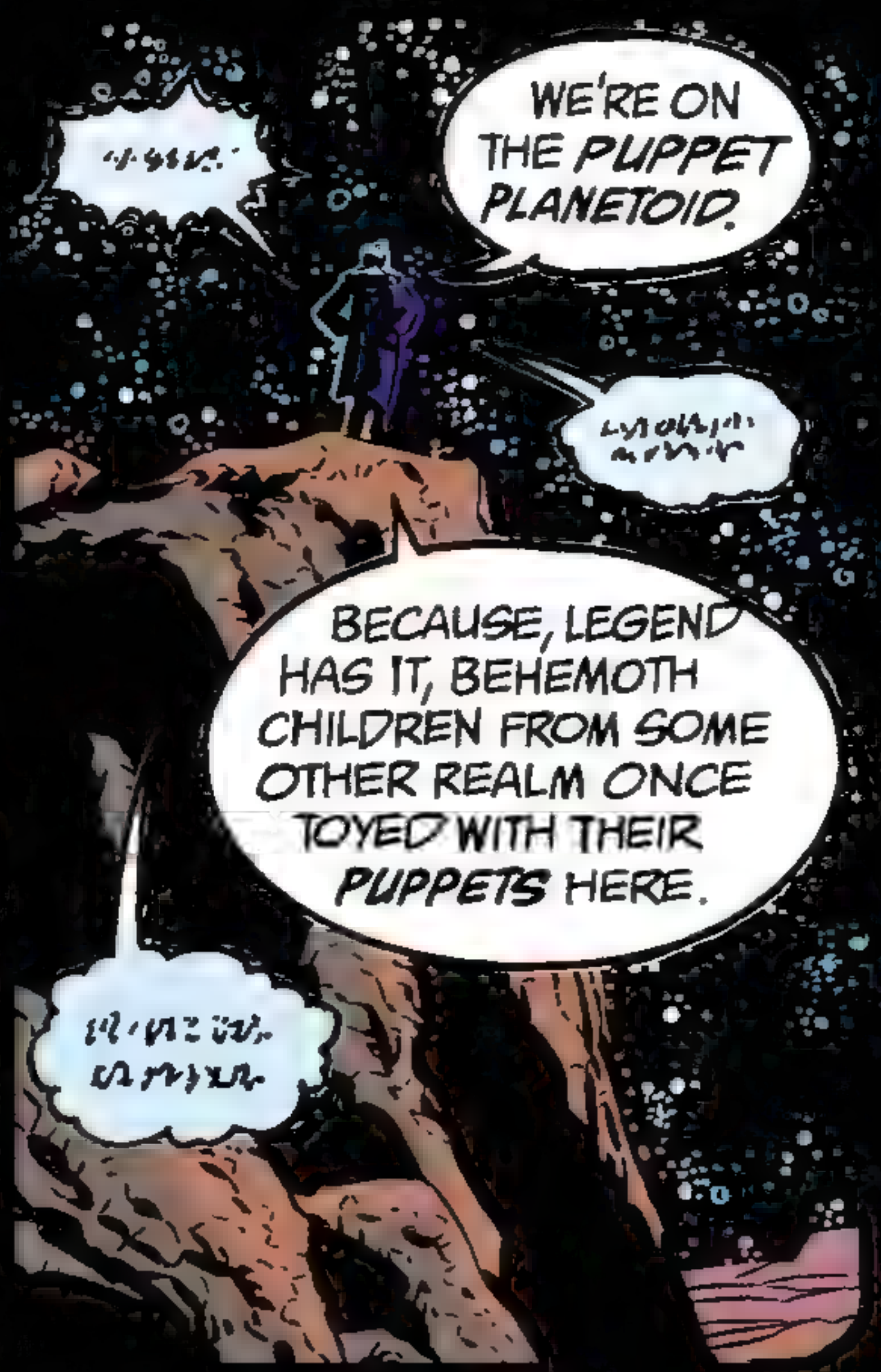
THIS IS DEFINITELY  
NOT EARTH.

MAN, I'M NOT SURE  
MY PUPILS HAVE EVER  
ADJUSTED TO THESE  
ENVIRONS! WHERE  
ARE W--



FREEZE! CAN WE  
DO SOMETHING ABOUT  
THAT CHATTER?

MASK HIS, ah,  
PERIPHERAL  
VOICES, PLEASE.



WE'RE ON  
THE PUPPET  
PLANETOID.

BECAUSE, LEGEND  
HAS IT, BEHEMOTH  
CHILDREN FROM SOME  
OTHER REALM ONCE  
TOYED WITH THEIR  
PUPPETS HERE.



I SUPPOSE  
IT IS A VERY GOOD  
COMPARISON.



EXCEPT THAT  
I DON'T NEED  
STRINGS TO  
CONTROL MY  
PLAYTHING.



AND THIS  
ONE ISN'T MADE  
OF WOOD.



I'M NOT  
SURE.

THIS IS SOMEHOW  
SUPPOSED TO BE HIS WAY  
OF SEEKING THE **SECRETS**  
THAT DIED OUT WITH  
HIS **RACE**.



THE ONLY  
SURVIVOR. AN  
ENTIRE RACE  
DEAD, EXCEPT  
FOR HIM...



YEAH, THERE'S ALWAYS ONE  
CLOWN WHO'S GOT TO MESS  
UP NATURE'S **SYMMETRY**.

...AS ONLY  
I KNOW TOO  
WELL.





OH, OUR FRIENDS HAVE HAD FOUR YEARS TO DEVELOP ANTI-LEGION WEAPONRY.

WAAH! WAAH! WAAH!

THIS WILL DO THE JOB, ALL RIGHT.



UHRN!

POOM!



WHA--? WHO--?

WH-WHO DISTURBS ME?



IT IS I, ROXXAS THE BUTCHER, GENOCIDE A SPECIALTY.

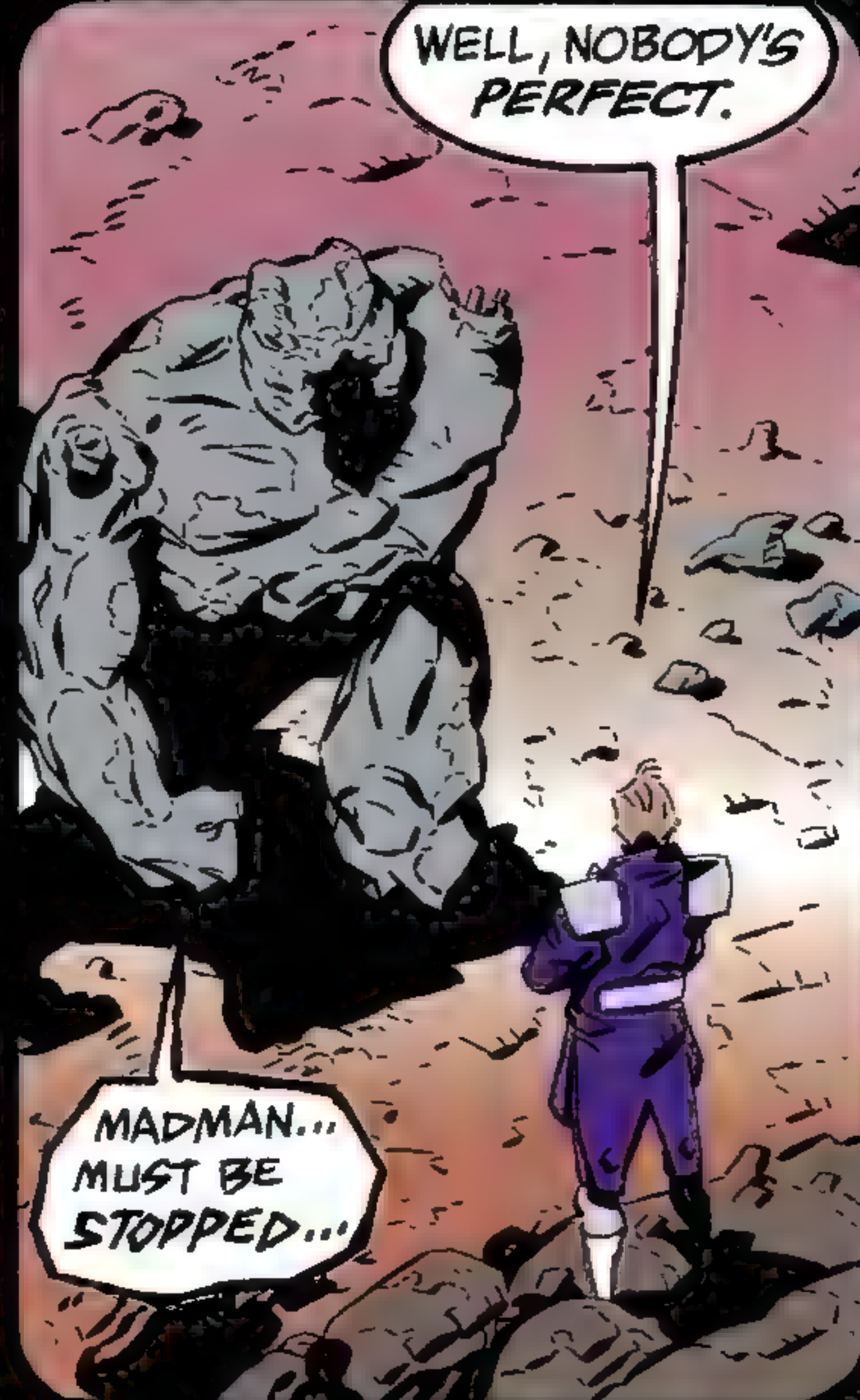
WAAH! WAAH! WAAH!

WAAH! WAAH! WAAH!

R-ROXXAS... LEGION HISTORY... TROM!



YOU'RE-- YOU'RE THE ONE... EXTERMINATED THE ENTIRE TROMITE RACE... EXCEPT FOR JAN ARRAH...



WELL, NOBODY'S PERFECT.

MADMAN... MUST BE STOPPED...



UHRN!

PATHETIC! STILL HALF ASLEEP!



BUT I'M A KIND SOUL. I'LL TRY TO MAKE THIS BRIEF.

POOM



UHRN!





13700741  
AH, THE SUPREME MOMENT IS AT HAND.



HEY. HEY! DON'T LEAVE ME NOW!

THIS IS A MOMENT TO BE SAVORED!

STAY WITH ME!



...STAY WITH ME...

...STAY WITH ME



THE MOTHER WORLD... DRYAD...

THE BEAUTY I THIRST FOR... THE TRUTHS THAT TANTALIZE ME.



THOSE TRUTHS, YOUNG BROTHER, HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT YOU. ON ALL WORLDS.

S-STRATA?! HALA-STRATA!



WE ARE TRULY BROTHER AND SISTER, BLOK. I, THE LAST FEMALE, YOU THE LAST MALE.

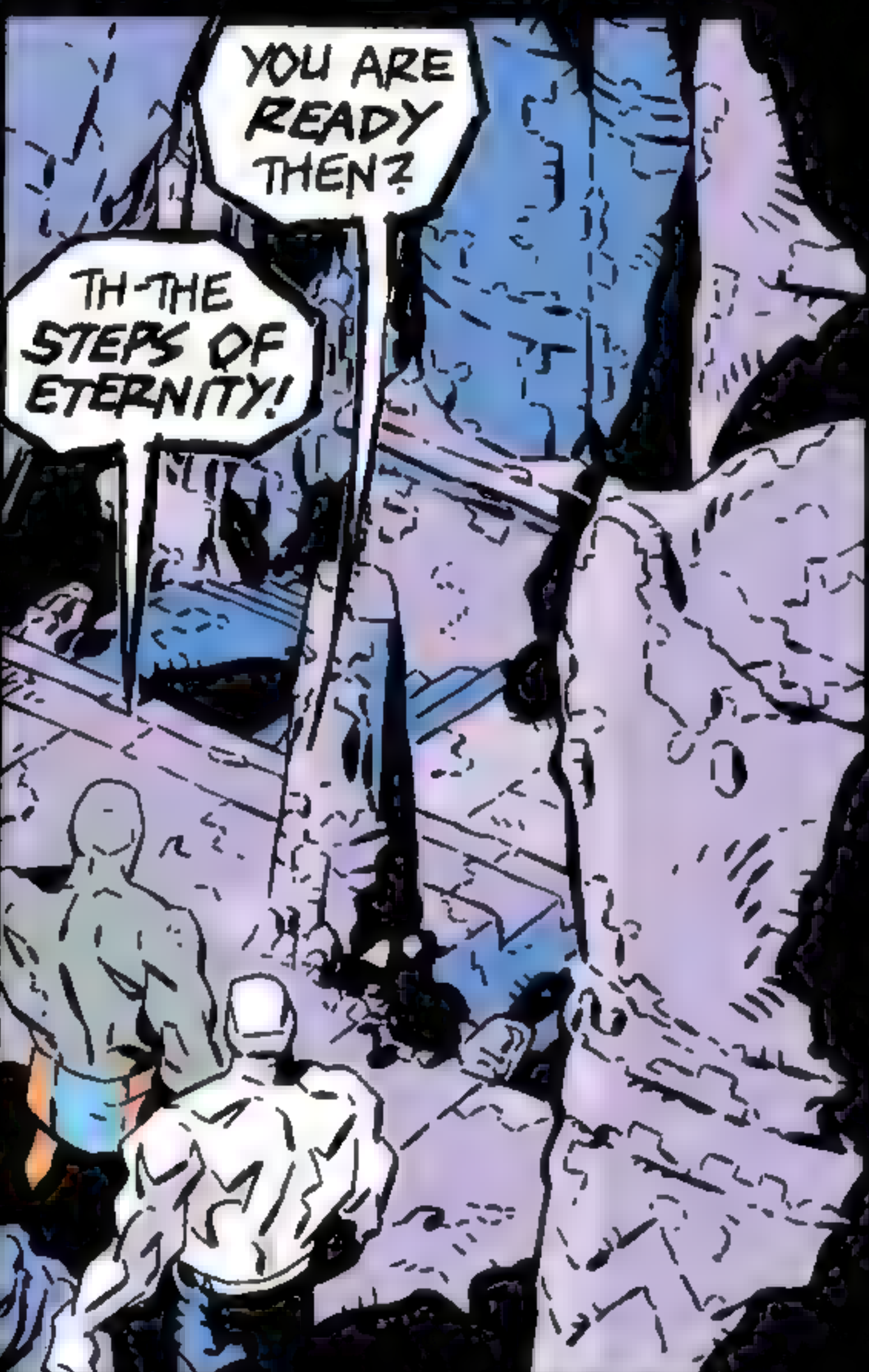
BOTH LEGENDS IN OUR FOLLY. SEEKING THE RACIAL TRUTHS BY FLEEING FROM THEM.



PLEASE, STRATA! HOW DO I FIND THESE TRUTHS?

THE PRICE IS GREAT, BROTHER. THERE IS NO RETURN FROM THIS JOURNEY.

PLEASE... I MUST KNOW!



YOU ARE READY THEN?

TH- THE STEPS OF ETERNITY!



THE FEMALES LEFT US FOREVER HERE!

IT WAS THEIR TIME. TIME TO FUSE WITH THE WORLD'S CORE.

TIME TO FIND THEIR PEACE...

...ALL EXCEPT ME...





THE KEY TO WHAT YOU ARE--TO WHAT OUR RACE WAS AND WILL BE--LIES THIS WAY.

YES!

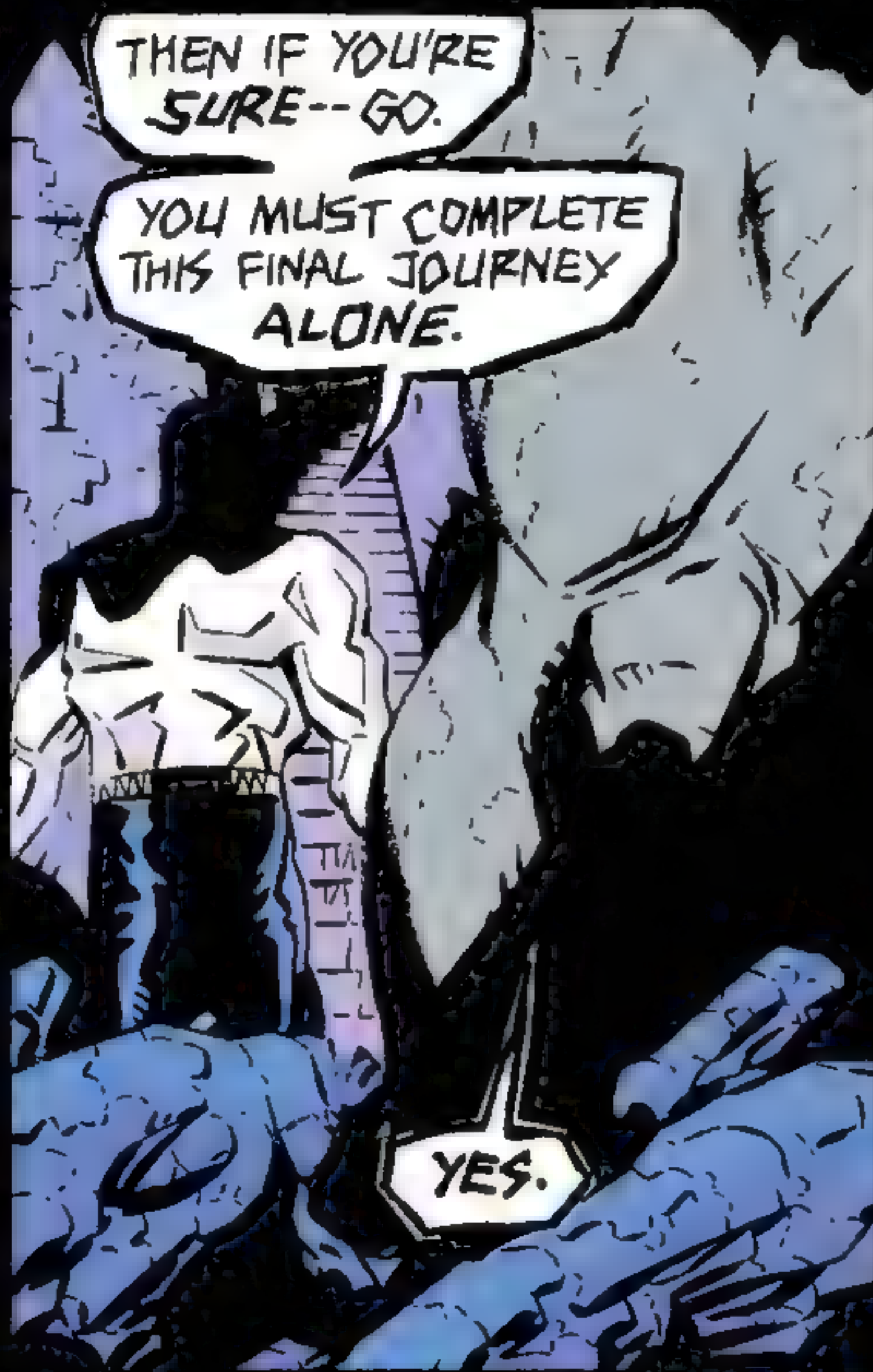
BUT THE PRICE IS GREAT.



I MUST KNOW.

YOU ARE READY?

YES, STRATA. I AM READY.



THEN IF YOU'RE SURE--GO.

YOU MUST COMPLETE THIS FINAL JOURNEY ALONE.

YES.



OH, YES. TO KNOW MY PEOPLE AGAIN. TO COMPREHEND THE SWEET MOTHER WORLD.

AFTER ALL THIS TIME. TO KNOW WHAT I AM!



YES. YES.

I AM READY!

POOM!



EFFICIENT EFFECTIVE, DISCREET.

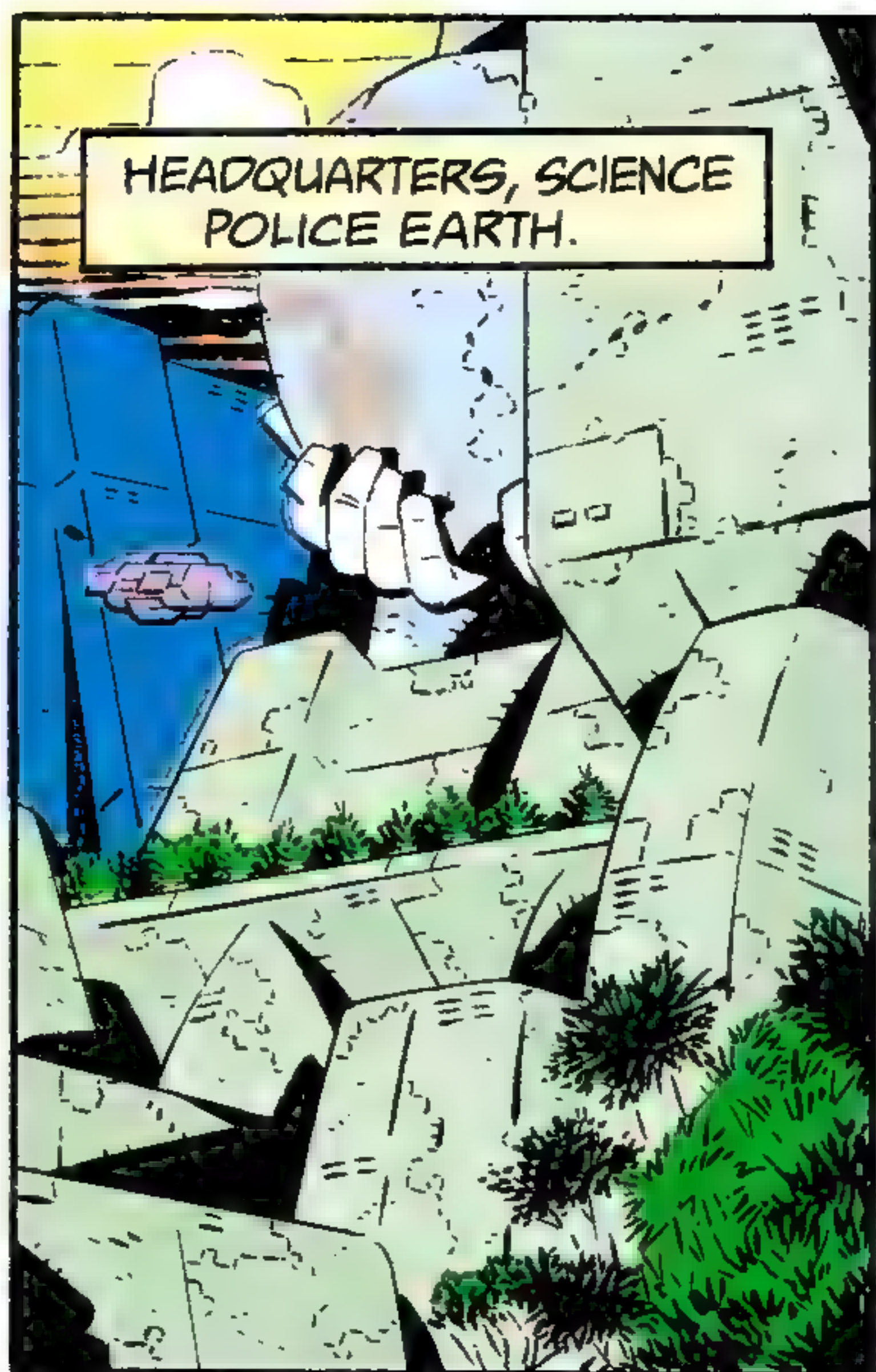


YES, ah MOST IMPRESSIVE.

I BELIEVE WE'VE FOUND OUR MAN.

**END TAPE**





HEADQUARTERS, SCIENCE  
POLICE EARTH.



no.

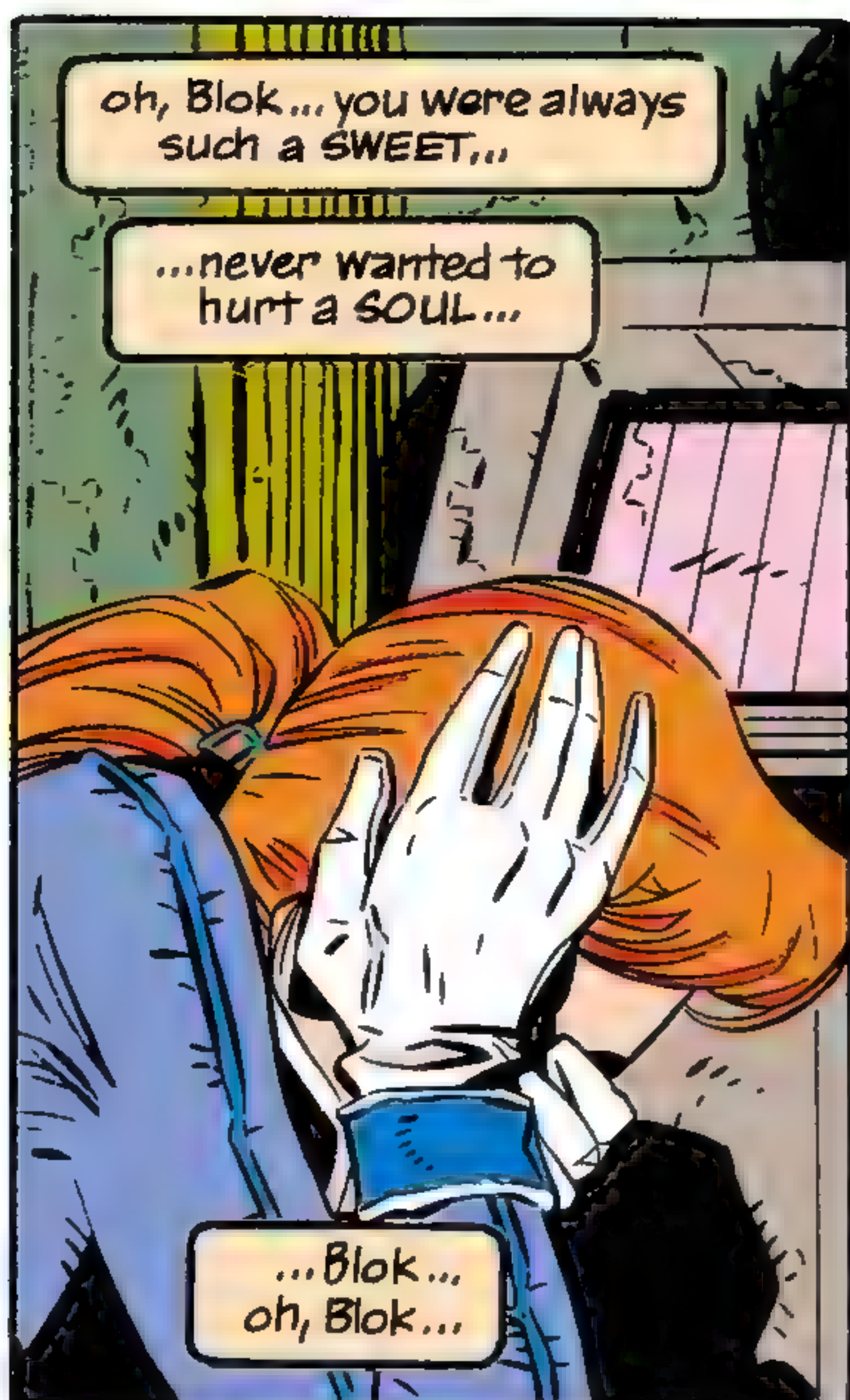


oh, no.



...oh, god...

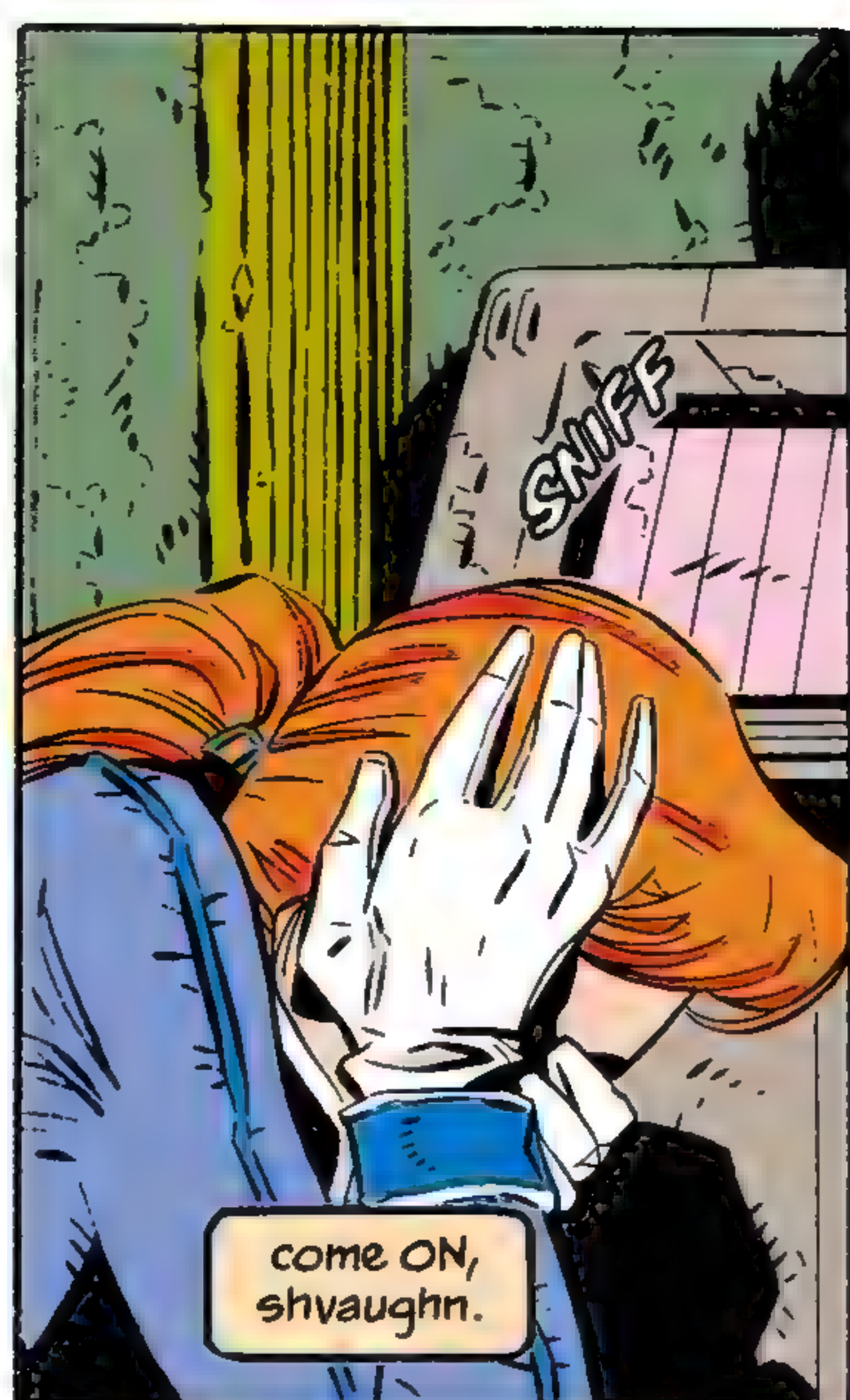
...those bloody  
bastards...



oh, Blok... you were always  
such a SWEET...

...never wanted to  
hurt a SOUL...

...Blok...  
oh, Blok...



SNIFF

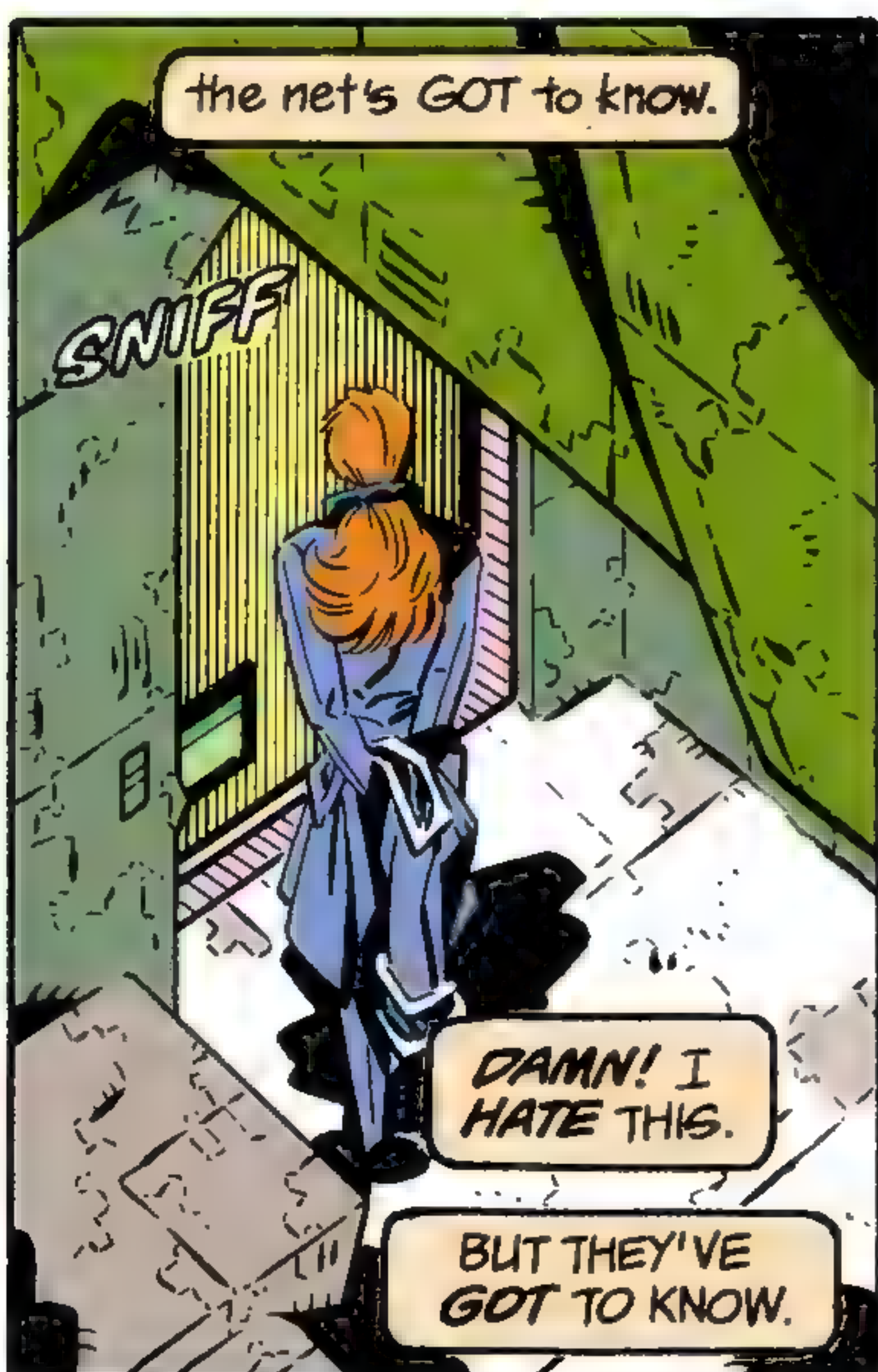
come ON,  
shvaughn.



tears are going to BLUR  
the transmission.

bawl your eyes  
out LATER.

for NOW, just get the  
transmission THROUGH.

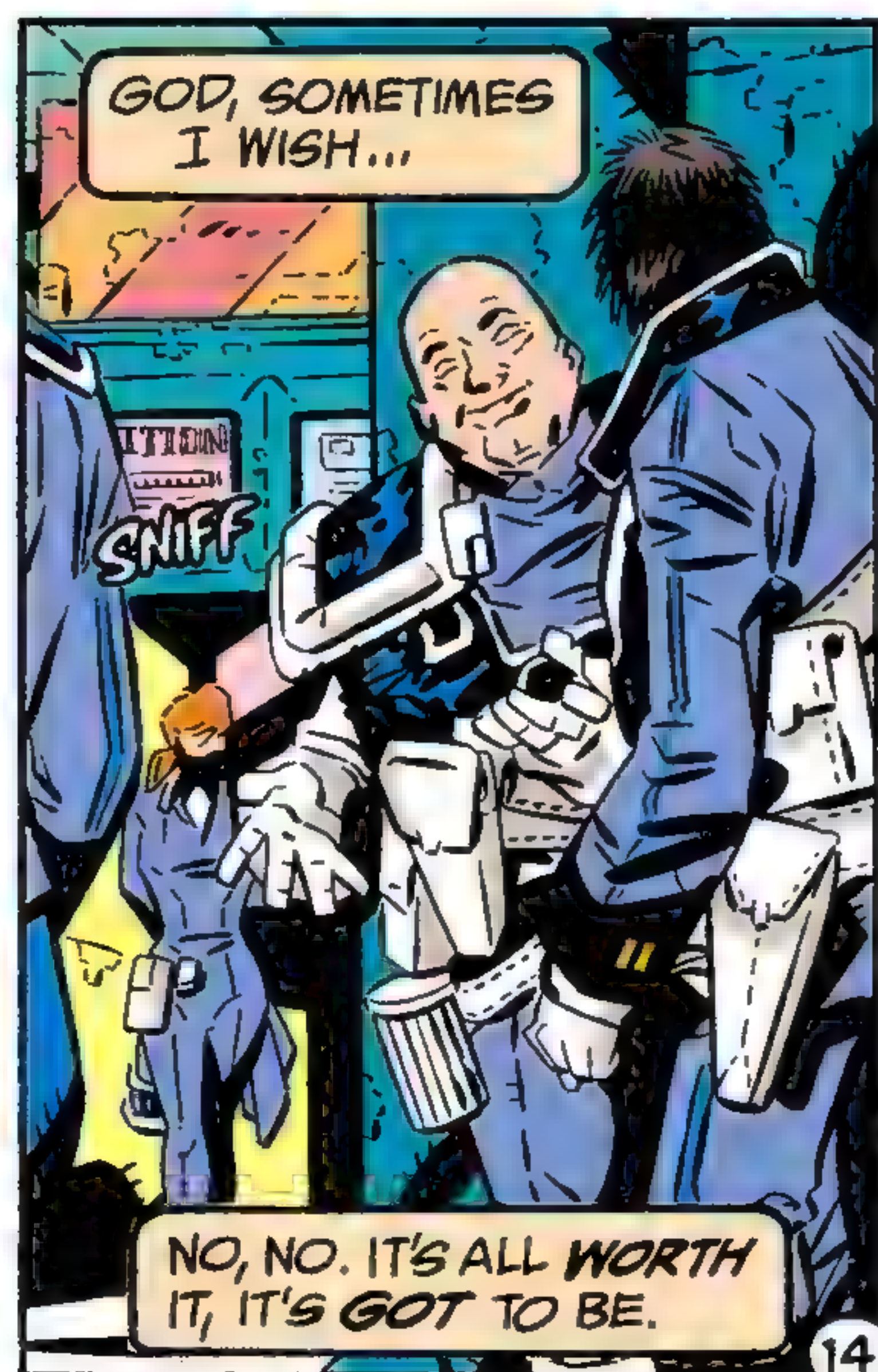


the net's GOT to know.

SNIFF

DAMN! I  
HATE THIS.

BUT THEY'VE  
GOT TO KNOW.



GOD, SOMETIMES  
I WISH...

SNIFF

NO, NO. IT'S ALL WORTH  
IT, IT'S GOT TO BE.



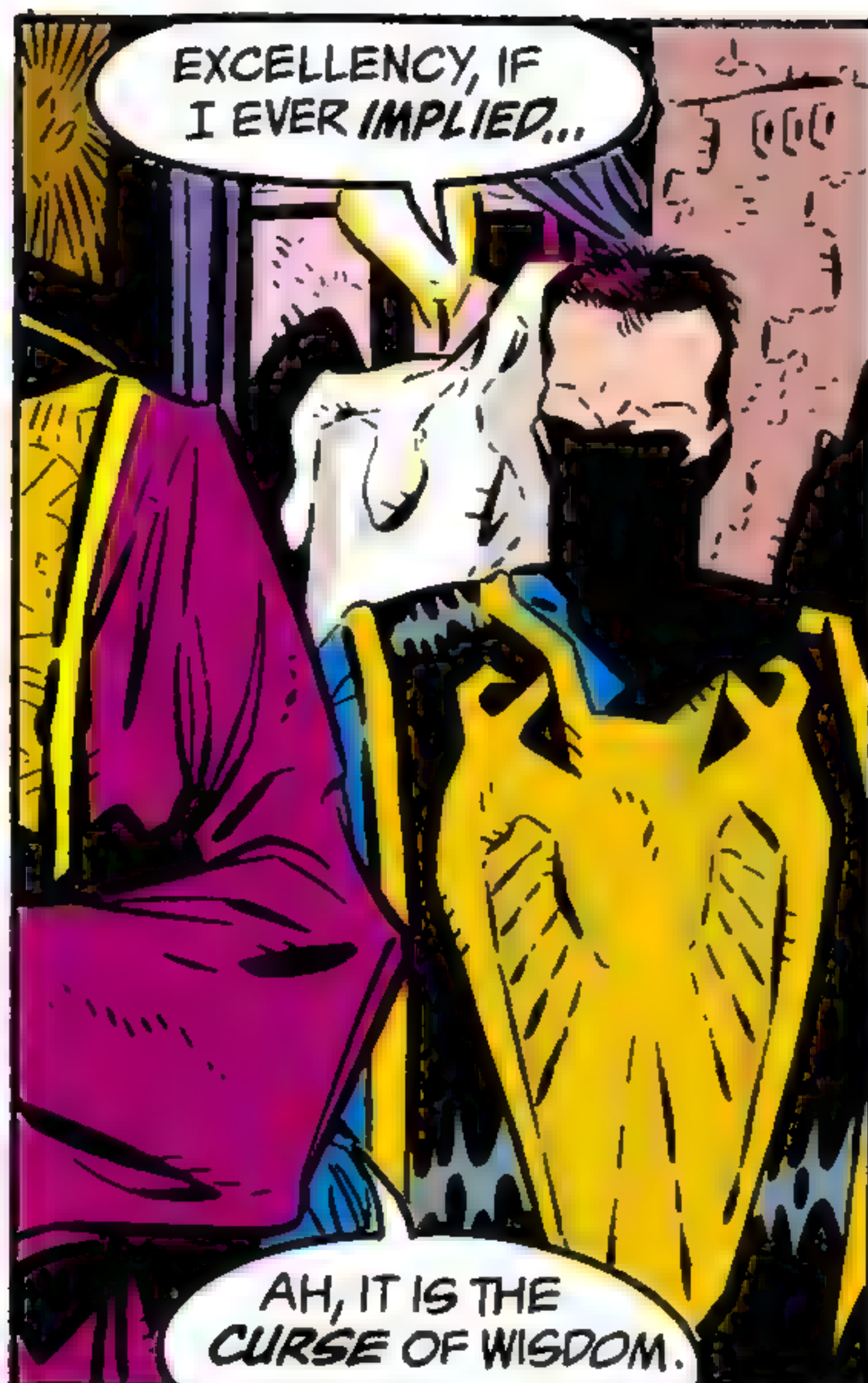


THARN...

YOU SENT FOR ME, EXCELLENCY?

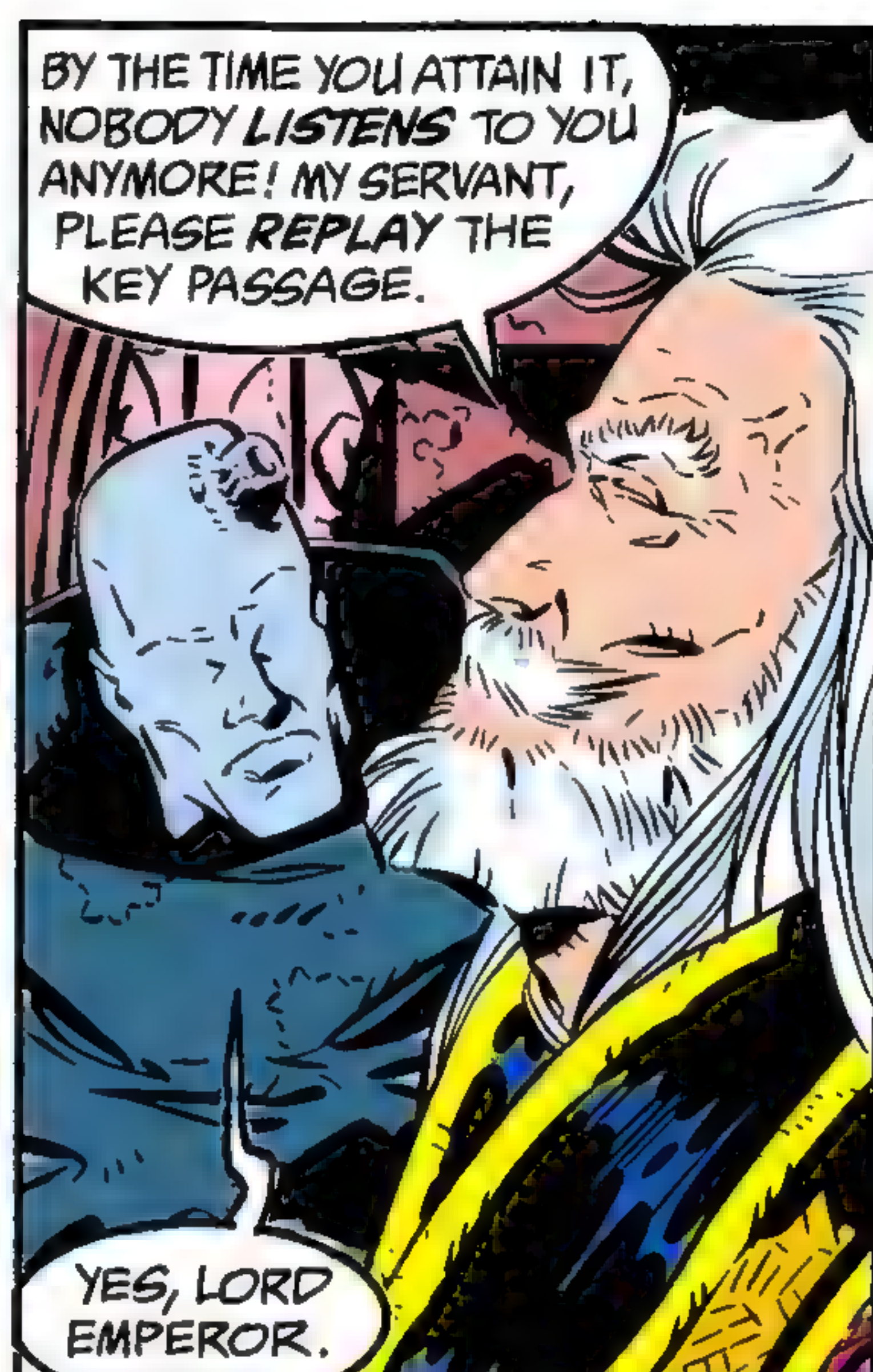
AH, VRYKOS. YES DO COME IN, MY PERPETUALLY SKEPTICAL FRIEND!

YOU, WHO WERE SO CERTAIN THE OLD MAN WAS PARANOID.



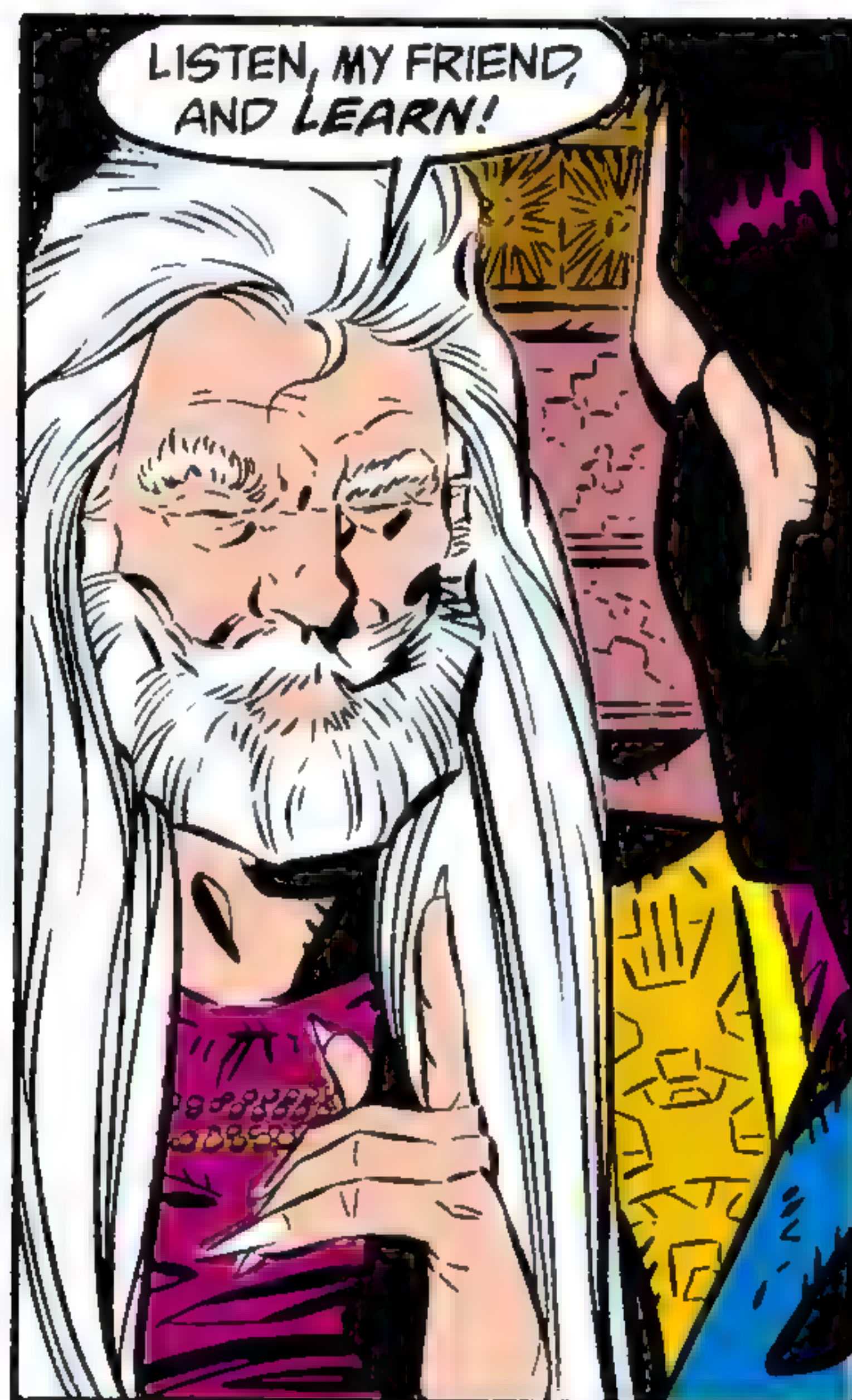
EXCELLENCY, IF I EVER IMPLIED...

AH, IT IS THE CURSE OF WISDOM.



BY THE TIME YOU ATTAIN IT, NOBODY LISTENS TO YOU ANYMORE! MY SERVANT, PLEASE REPLAY THE KEY PASSAGE.

YES, LORD EMPEROR.



LISTEN, MY FRIEND, AND LEARN!



THE PASSAGE BEGINS...

GEEZ, JO, ENOUGH ALREADY!

I THINK I HURT SOMETHING...

HEY, C'MON, CHAM, ROKK! YOU GUYS HAVE TO HAVE A DRINK!



NOT THERE, IMBECILE. AHEAD. AHEAD!

UH...UH... YES, LORD EMPEROR, YES!



...WELL I'M SURE GLAD YOU CAME TO ME FIRST!

WE HAD NO CHOICE, JO. WE'VE GOT TO GO AFTER MYSA.

MYSA? ISN'T SHE WITH--GRIFE! NO WONDER YOU CAME AFTER ME!

ENOUGH.



THERE, YOU SEE?

THEY MEAN TO TEST THE OLD MAN ONCE AGAIN.

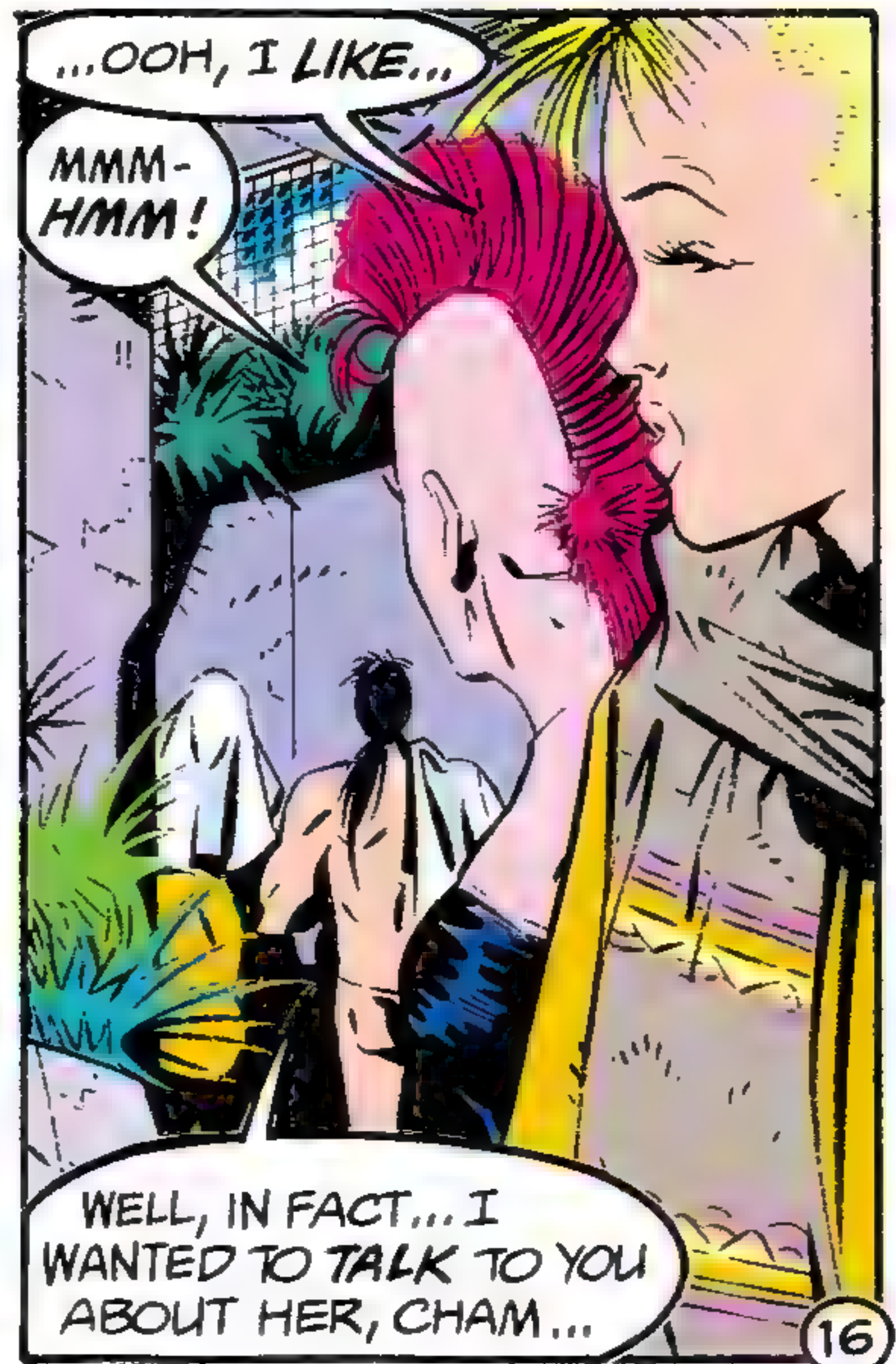
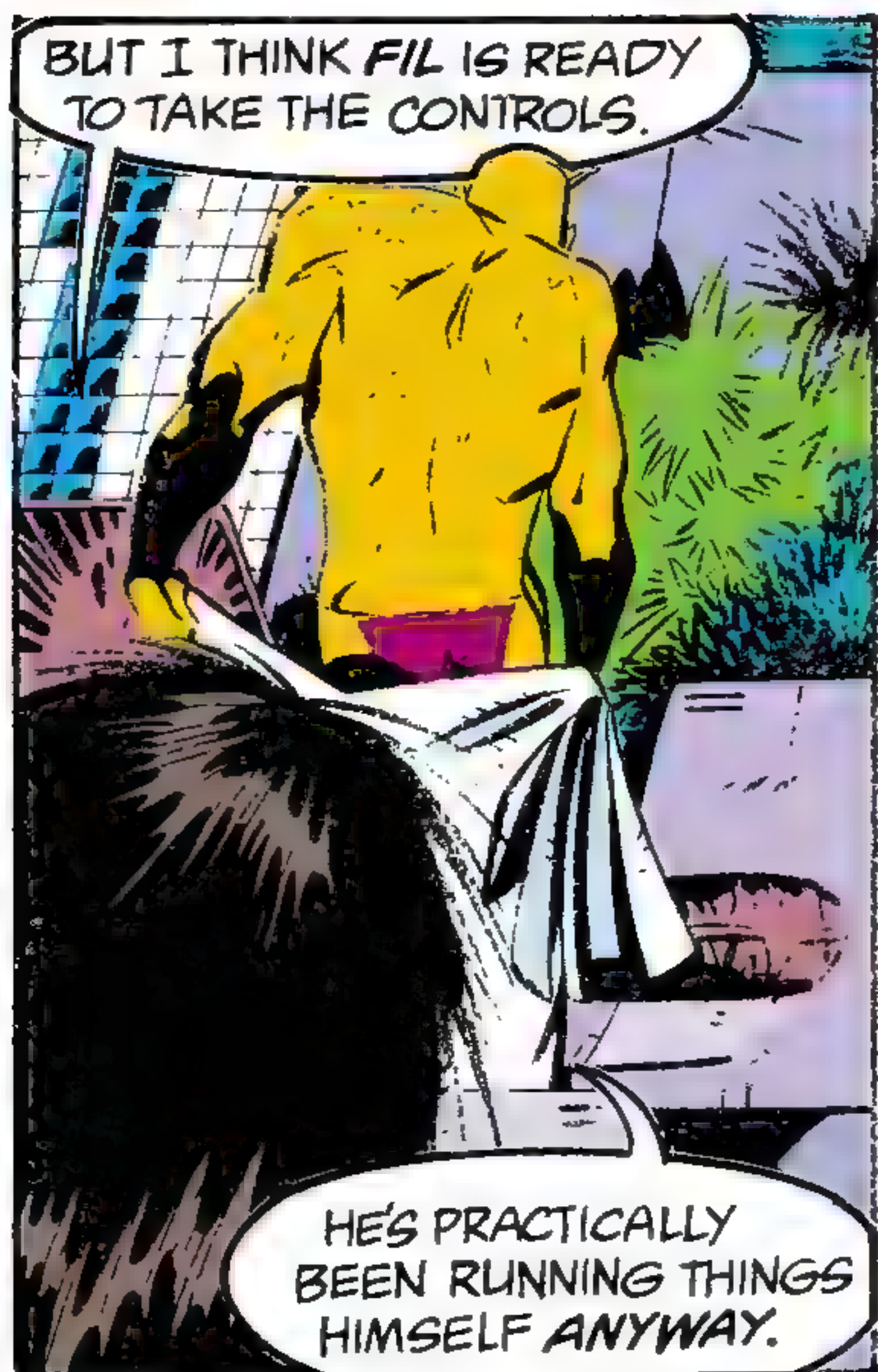
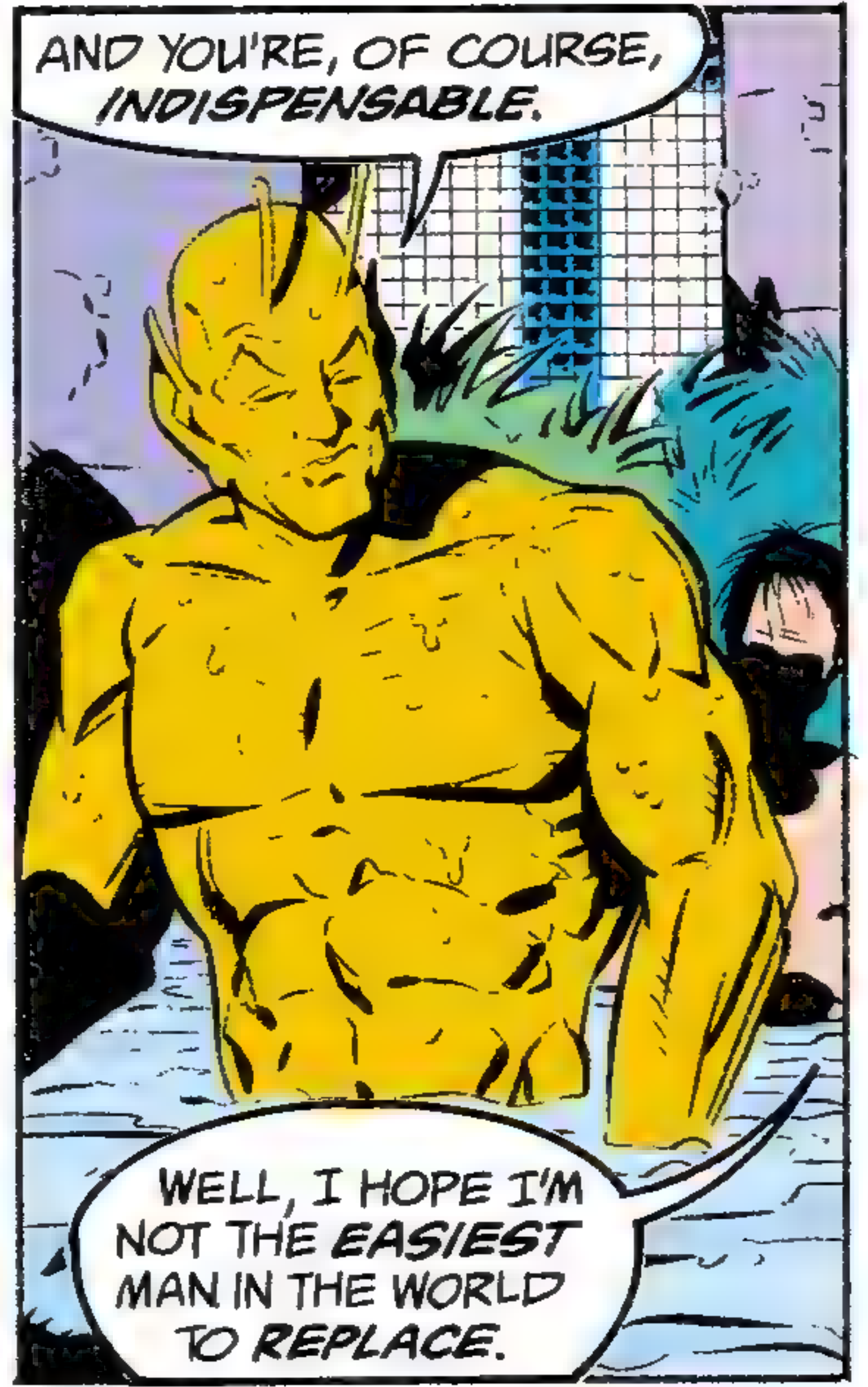
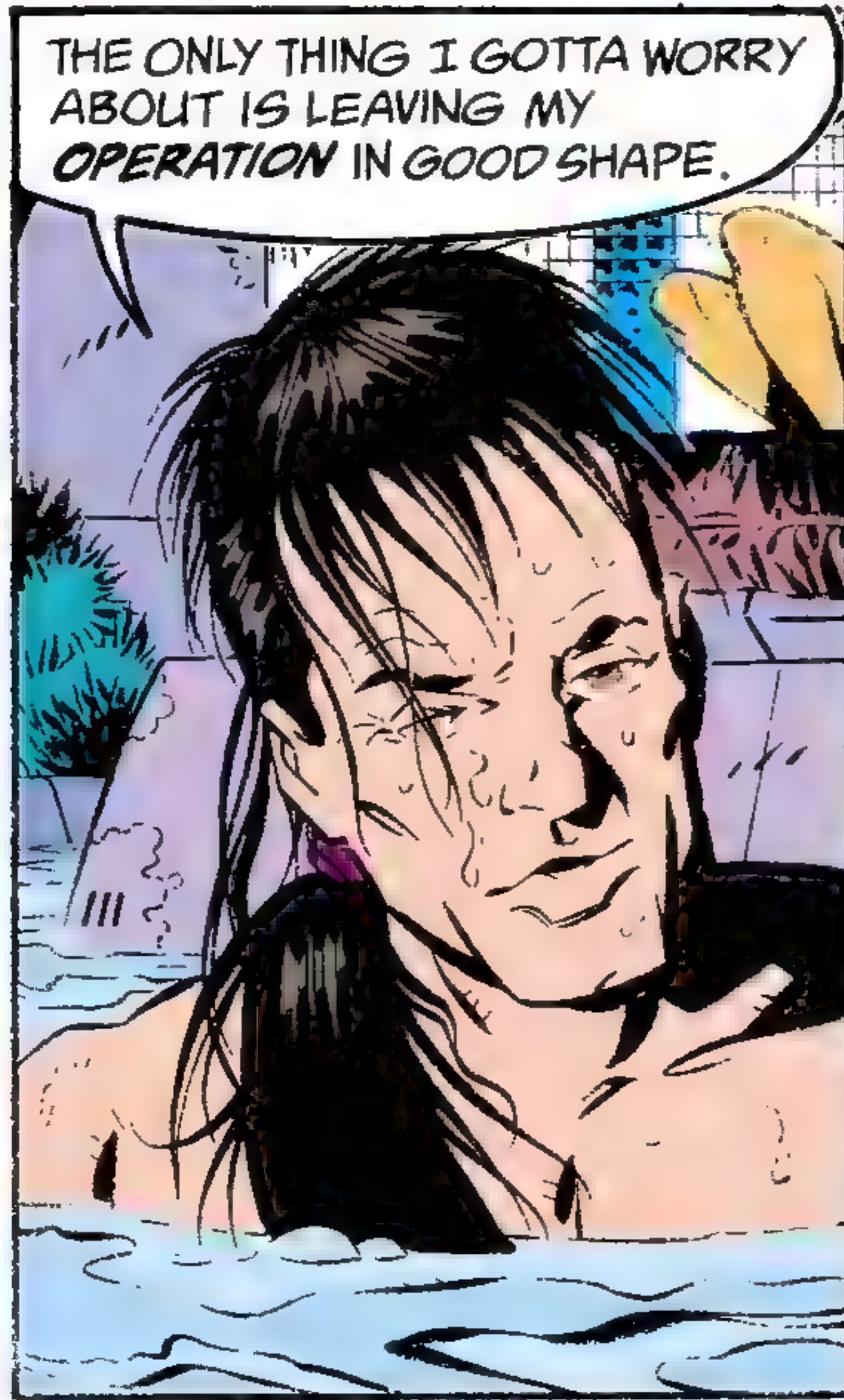
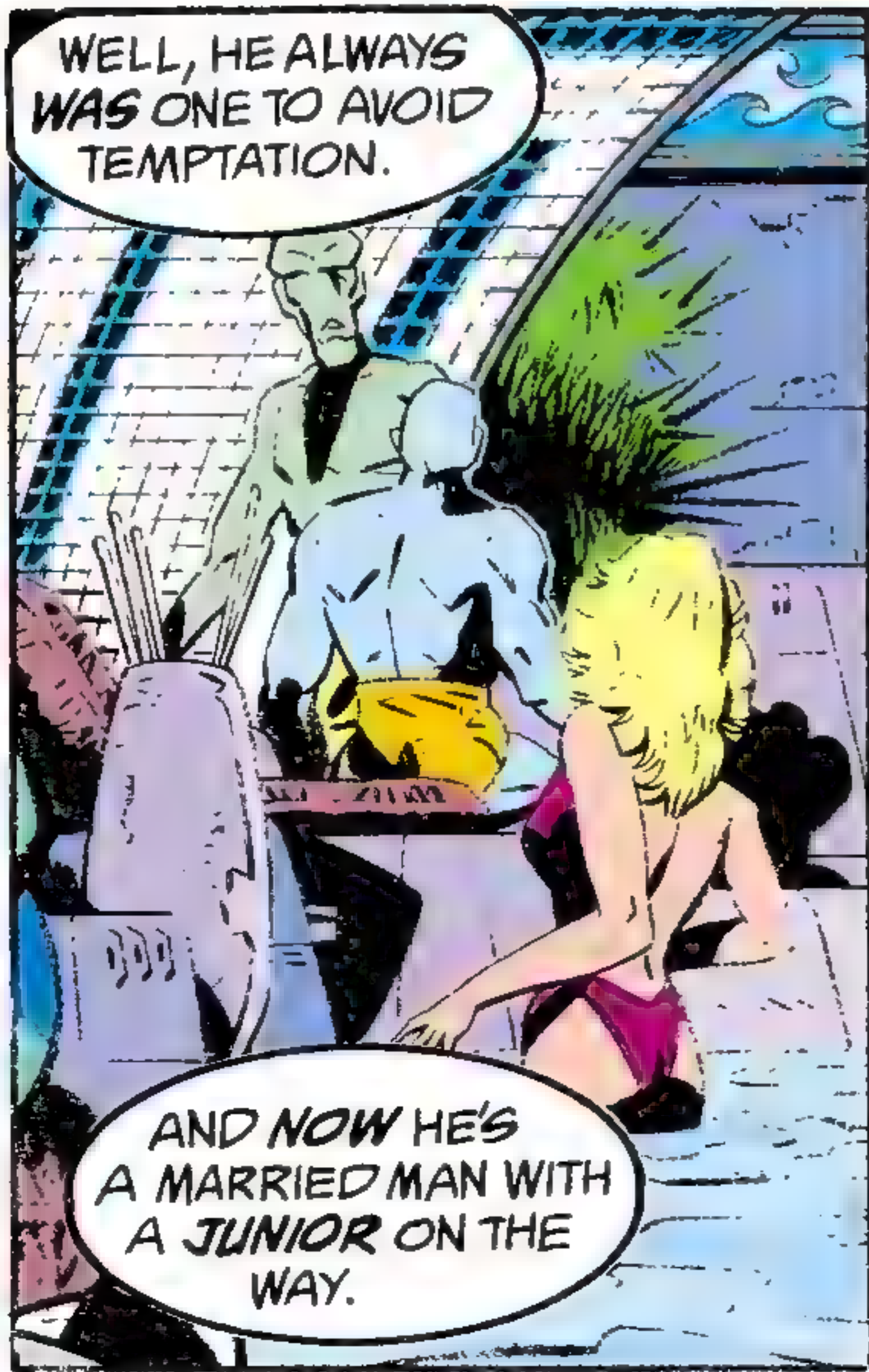
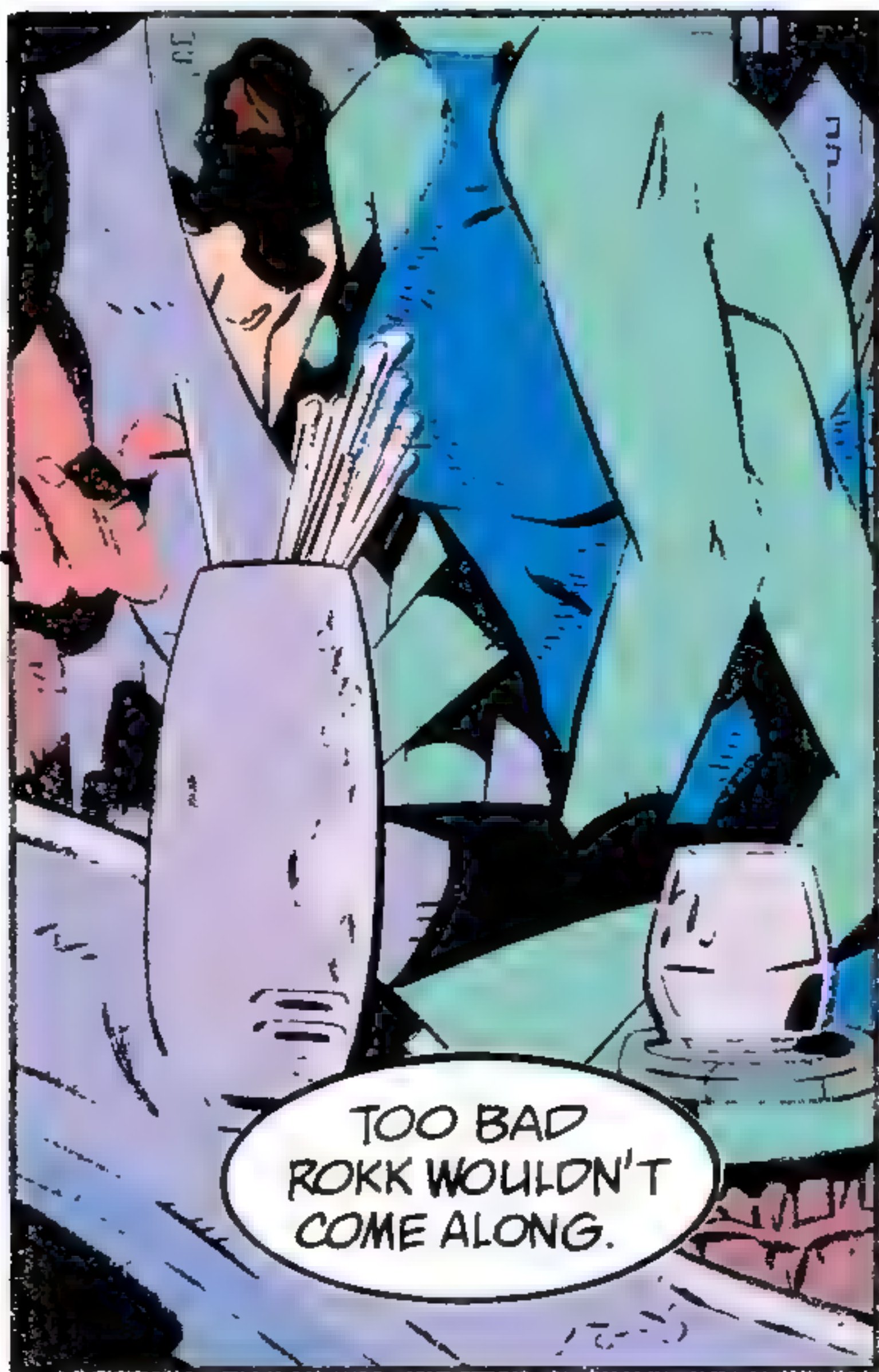


NOTHING TO SAY, VRYKOS?

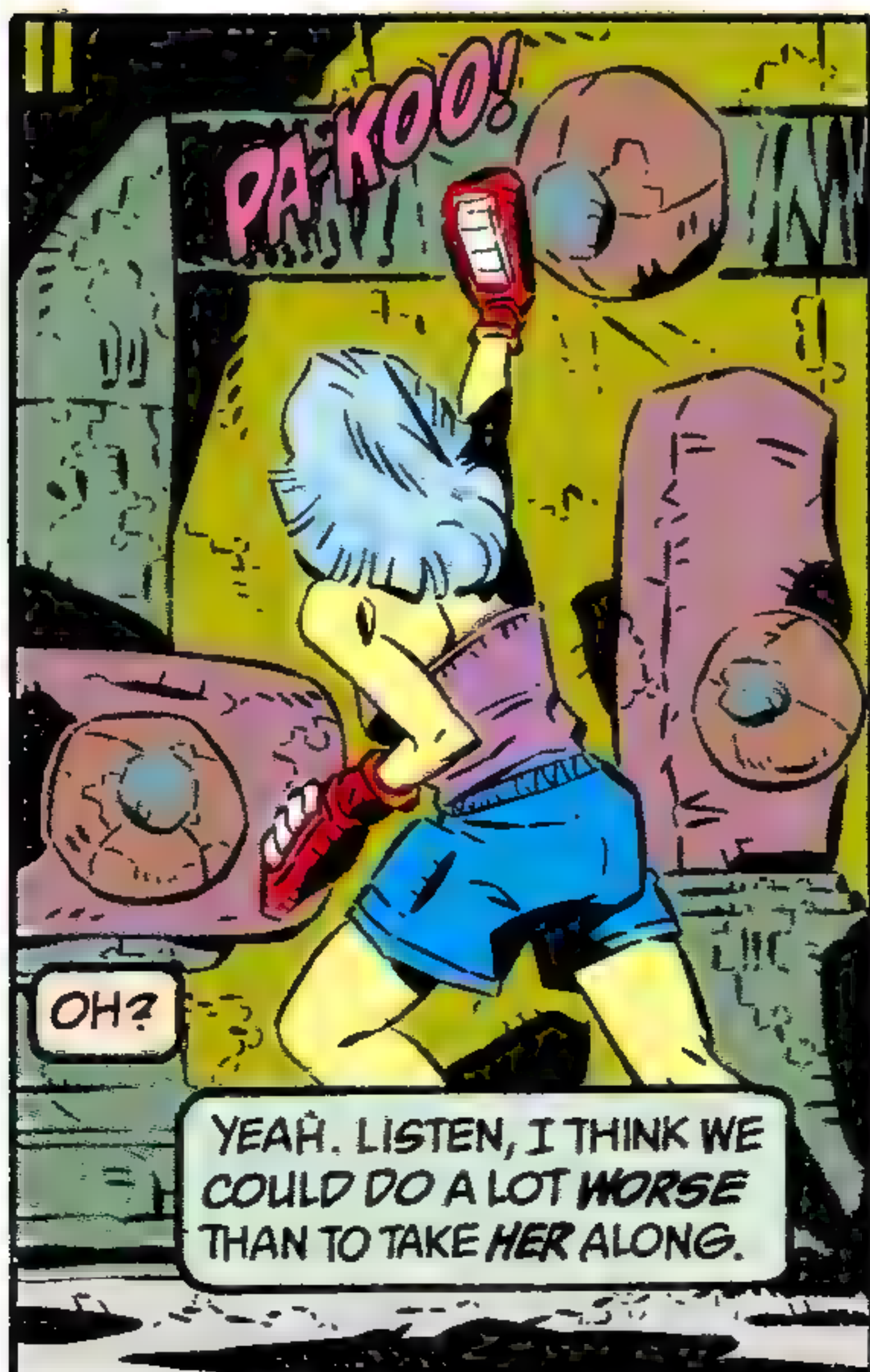
UH, PERHAPS WE SHOULD PREPARE...

I THINK THAT WOULD BE WISE.



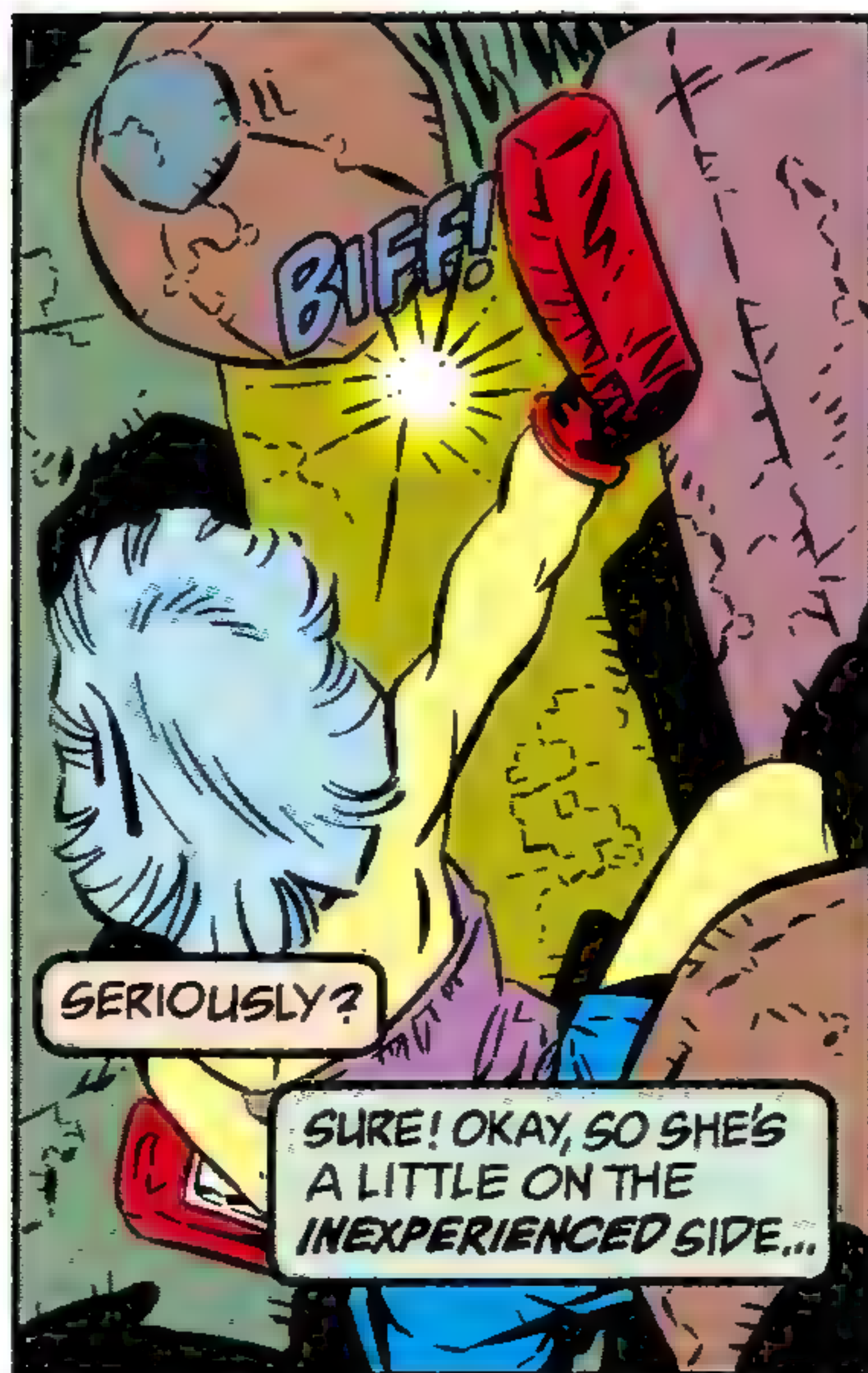






OH?

YEAH. LISTEN, I THINK WE  
COULD DO A LOT WORSE  
THAN TO TAKE HER ALONG.

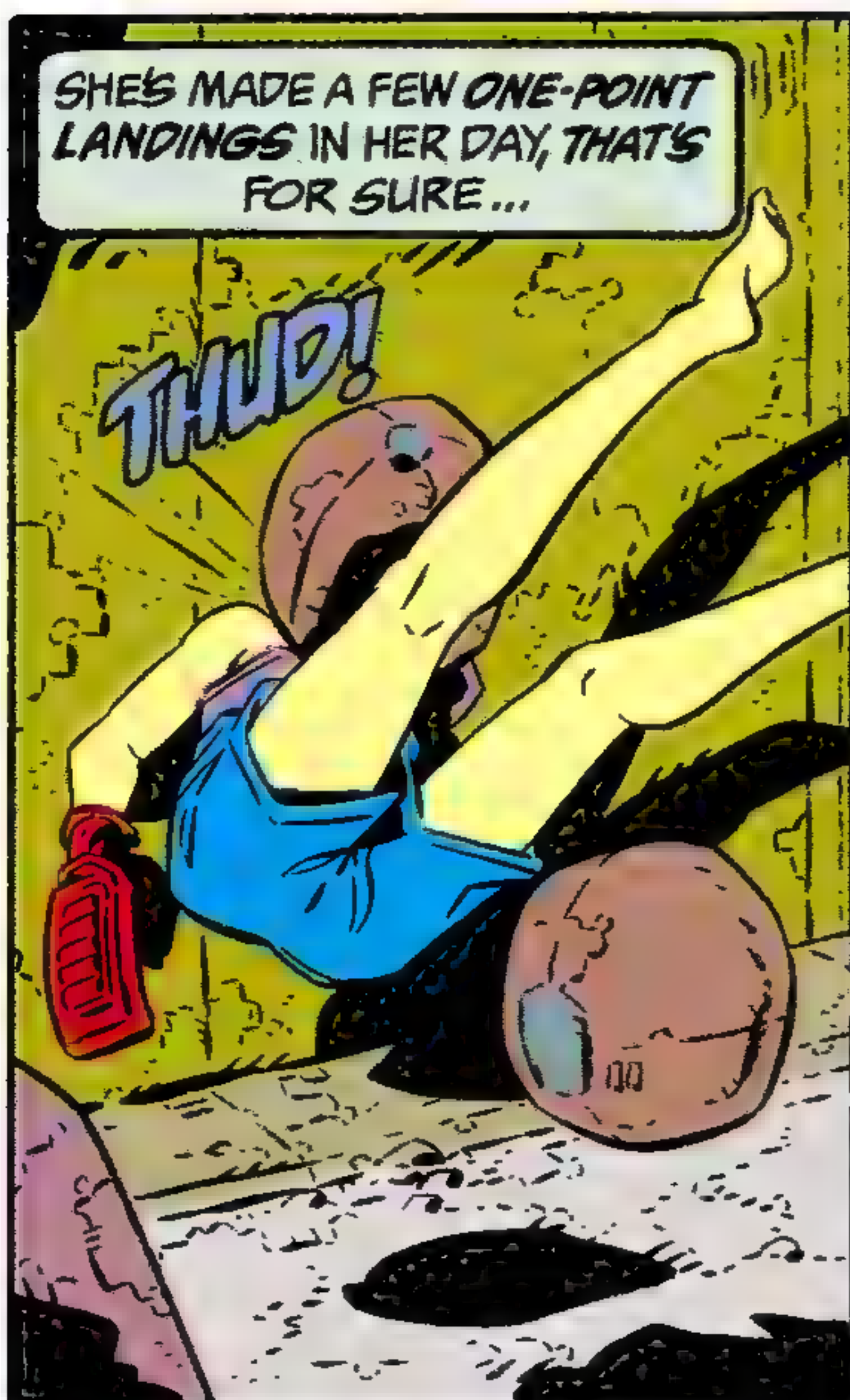


SERIOUSLY?

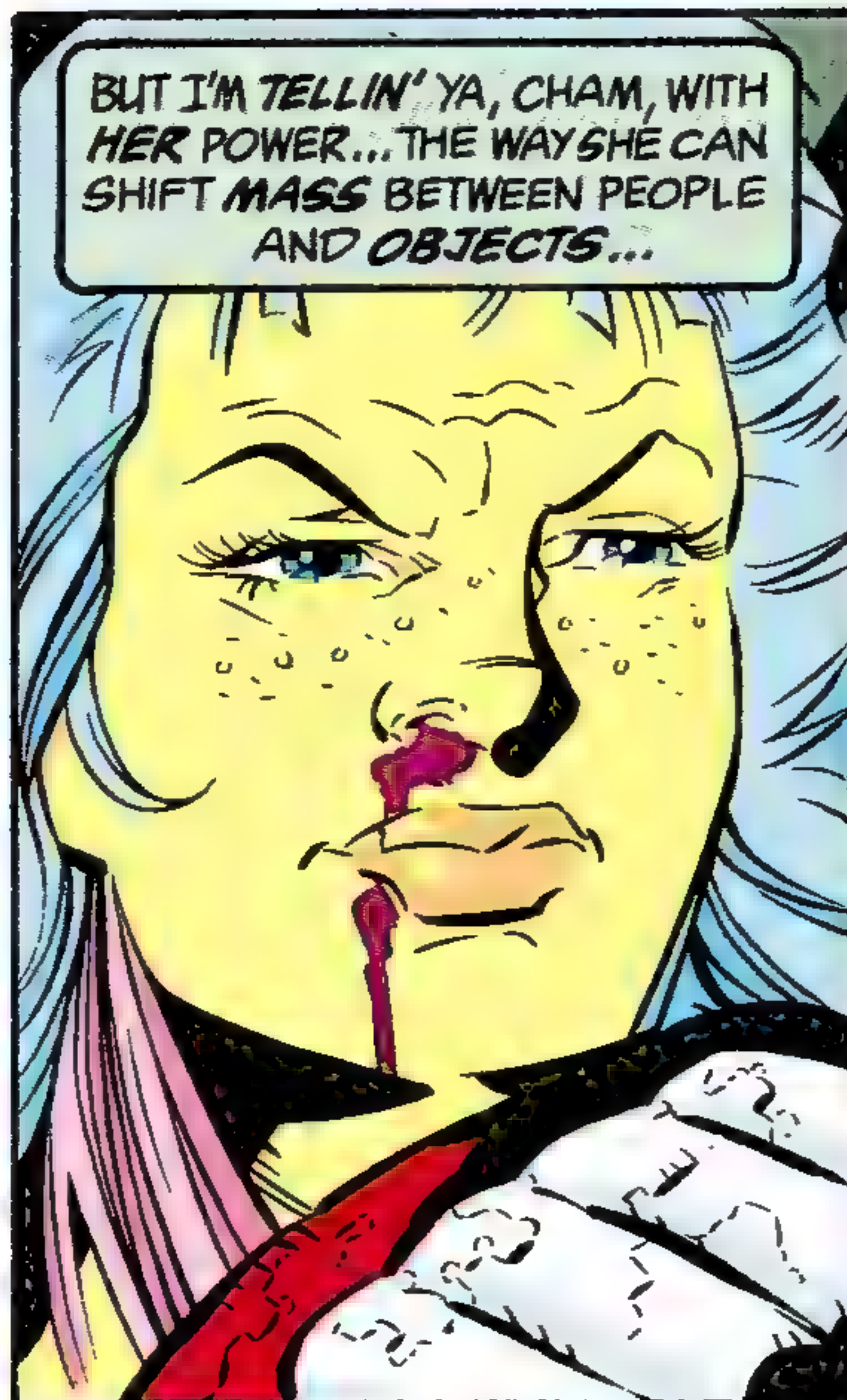
SURE! OKAY, SO SHE'S  
A LITTLE ON THE  
INEXPERIENCED SIDE...



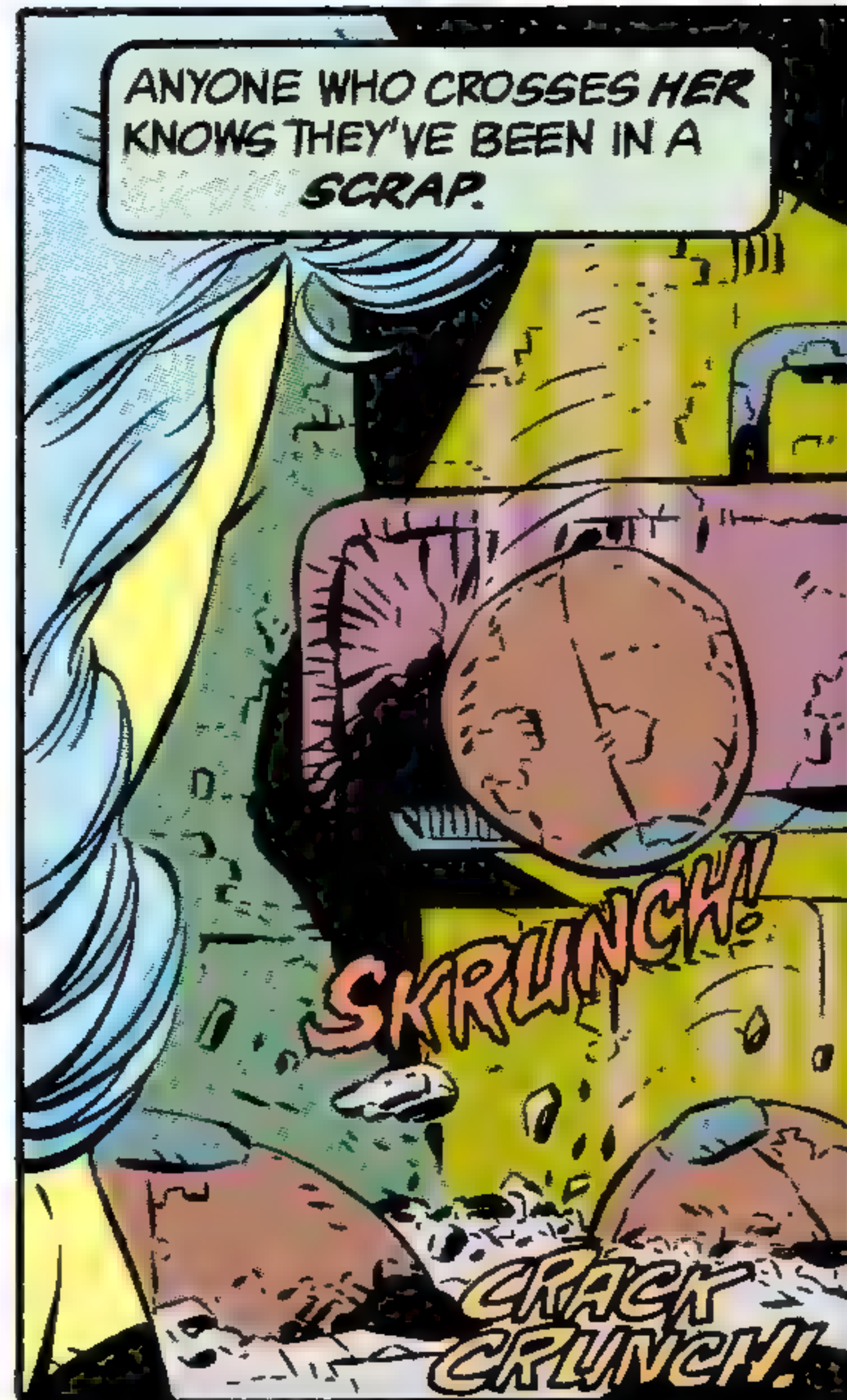
MAYBE SHE'S GOT A  
TENDENCY TO GET IN  
OVER HER HEAD...



SHE'S MADE A FEW ONE-POINT  
LANDINGS IN HER DAY, THAT'S  
FOR SURE...



BUT I'M TELLIN' YA, CHAM, WITH  
HER POWER... THE WAY SHE CAN  
SHIFT MASS BETWEEN PEOPLE  
AND OBJECTS...

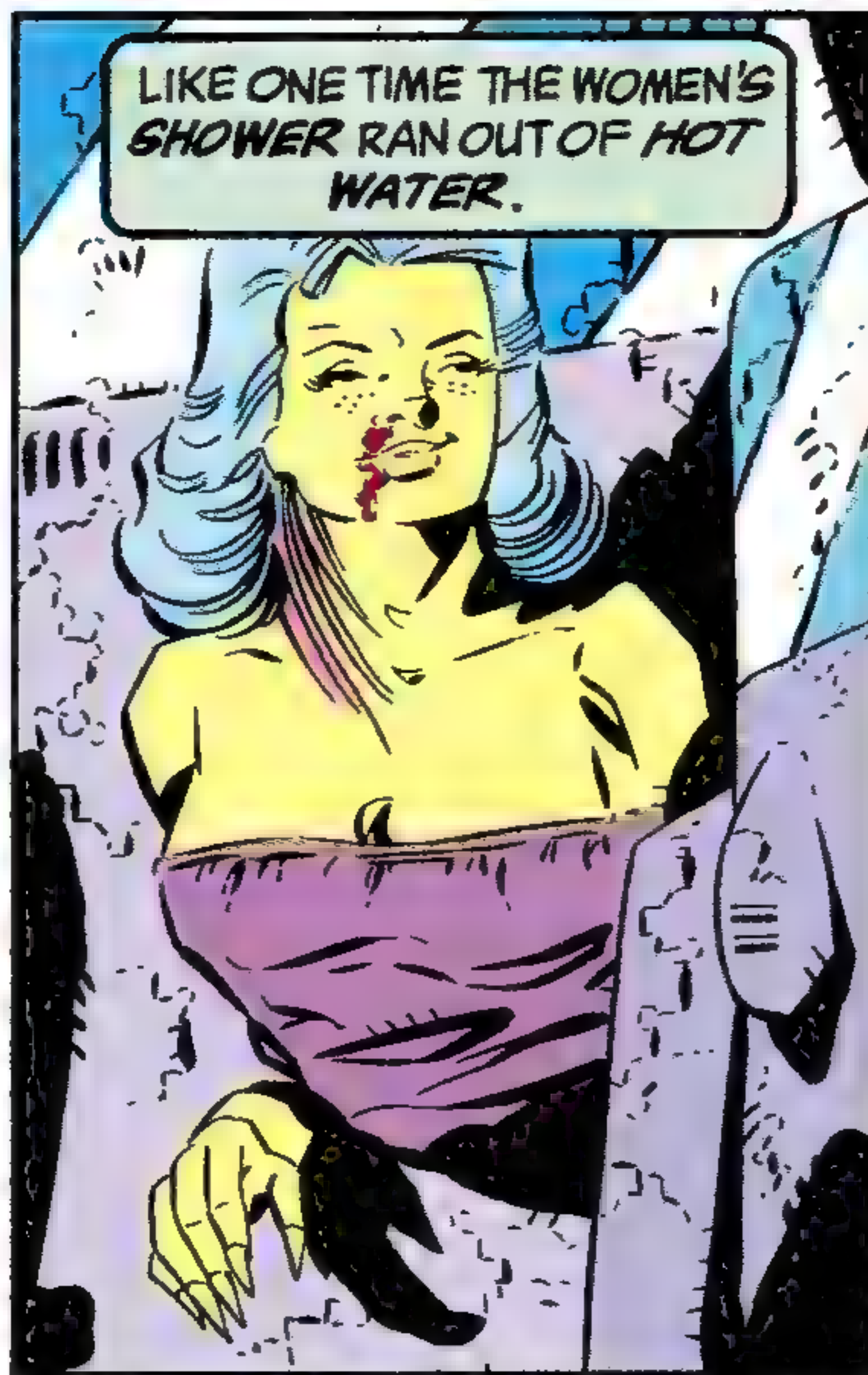


ANYONE WHO CROSSES HER  
KNOWS THEY'VE BEEN IN A  
SCRAP.

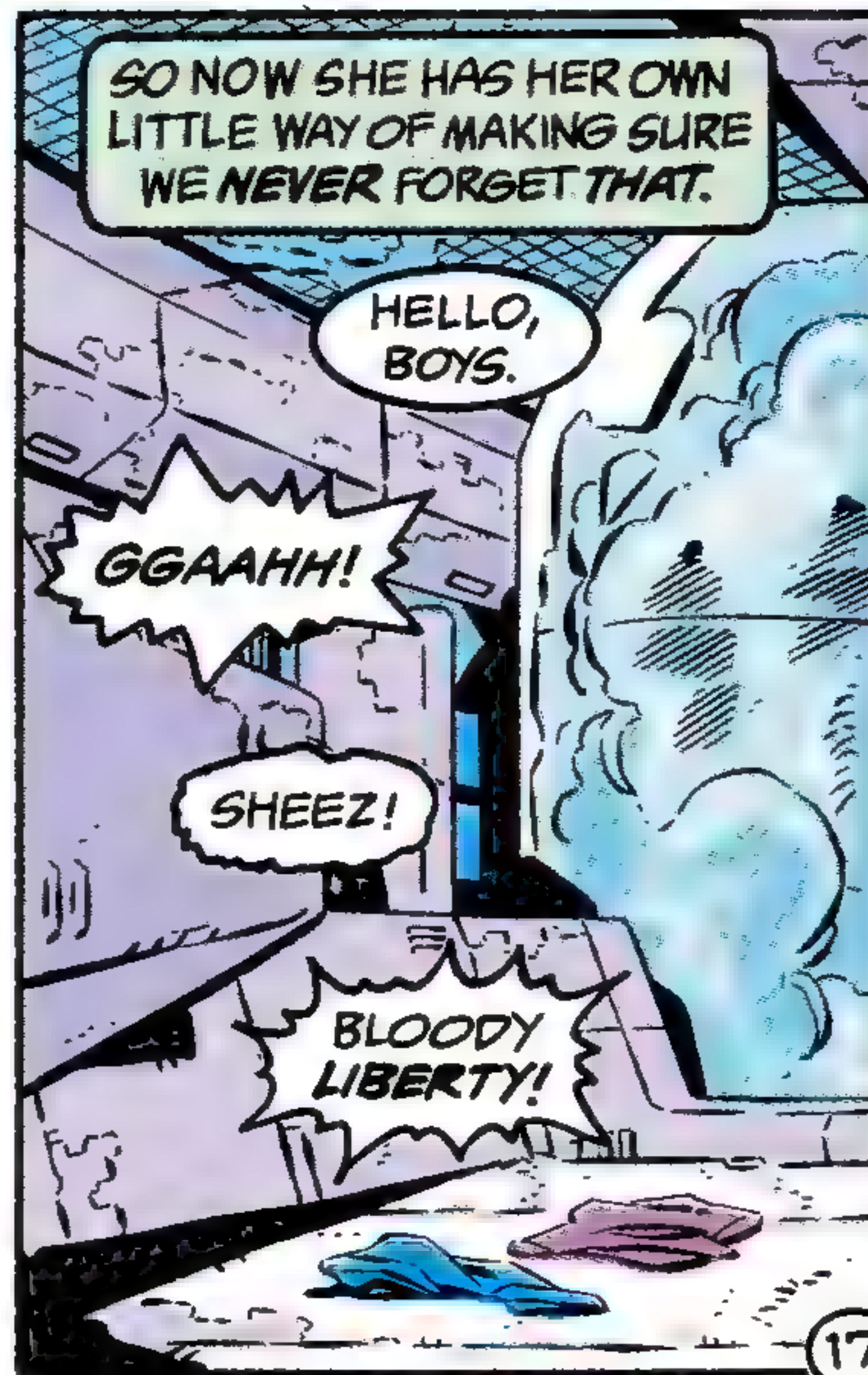


'COURSE, SHE DOES KIND OF  
PRIDE HERSELF ON BEING A  
PAIN IN THE BUTT...

HUM-DE-  
DUM



LIKE ONE TIME THE WOMEN'S  
SHOWER RAN OUT OF HOT  
WATER.



SO NOW SHE HAS HER OWN  
LITTLE WAY OF MAKING SURE  
WE NEVER FORGET THAT.

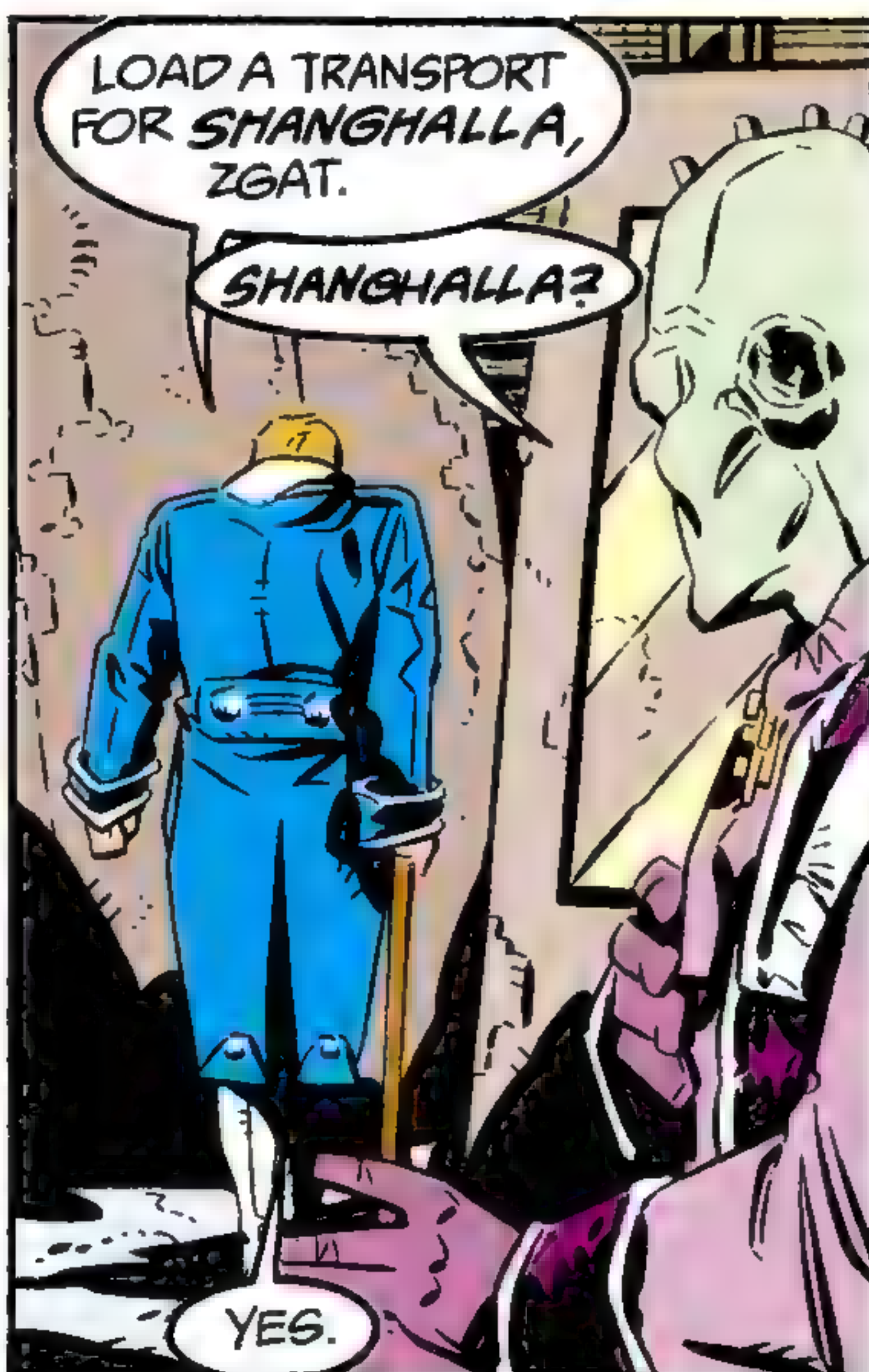
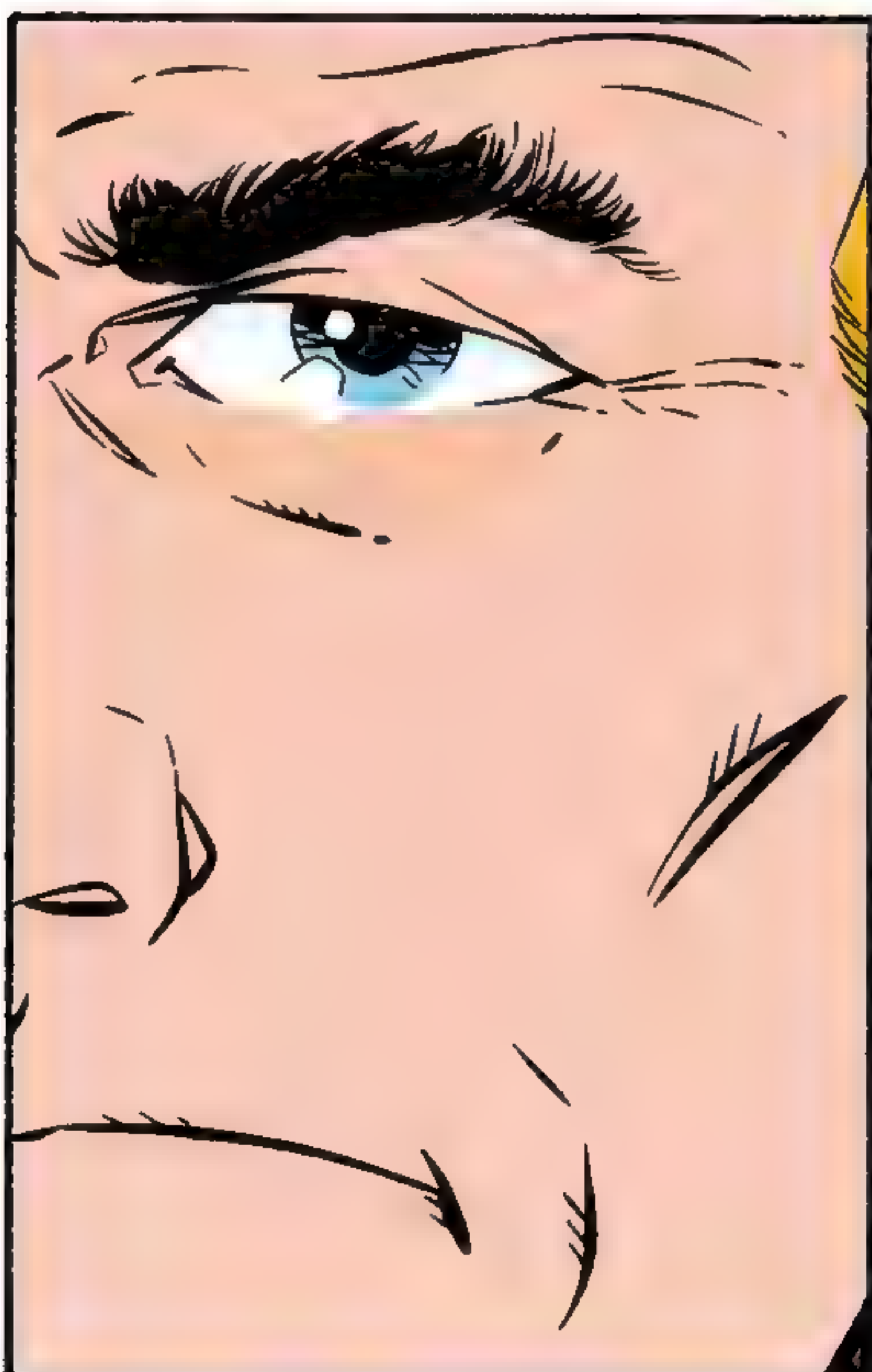
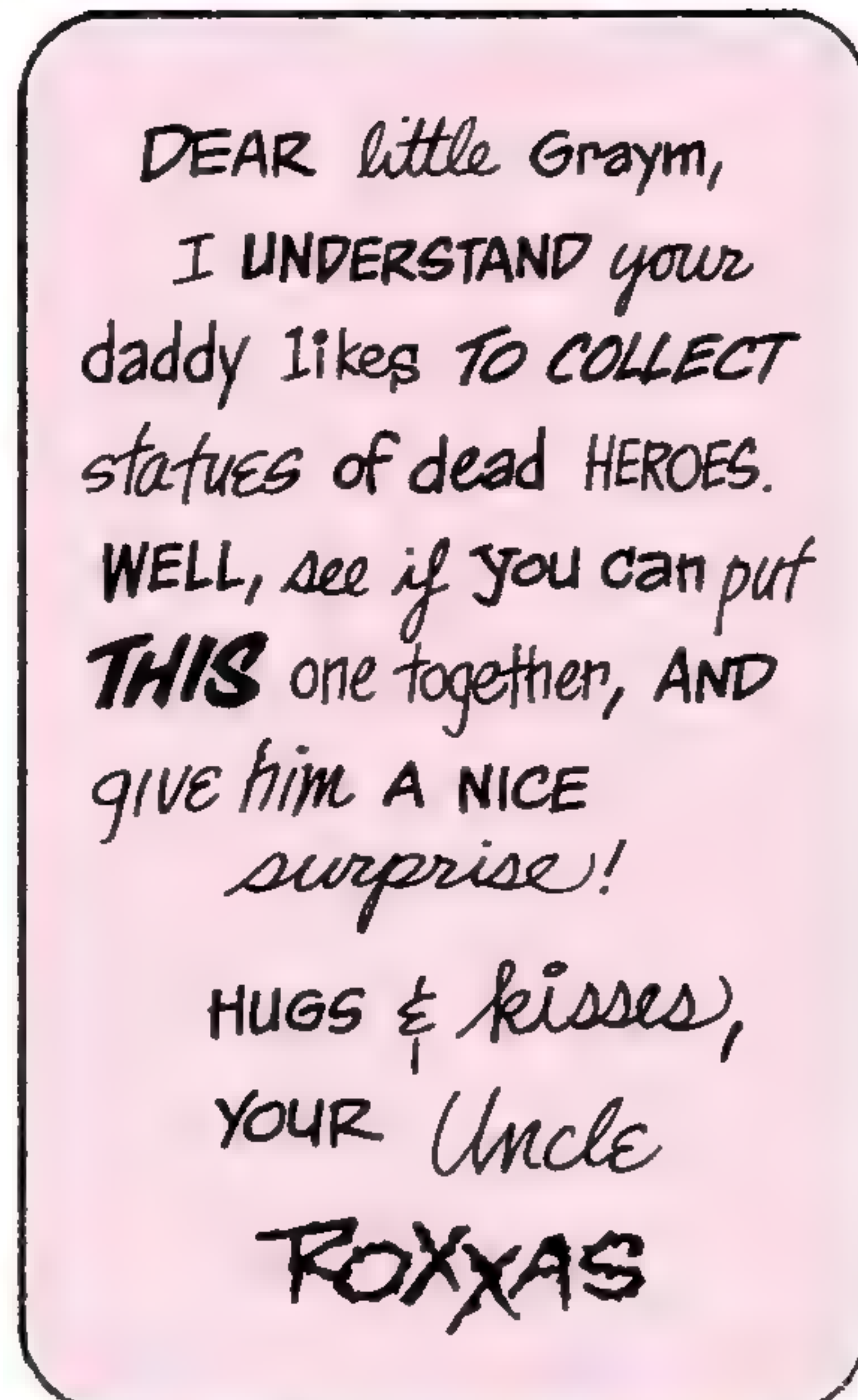
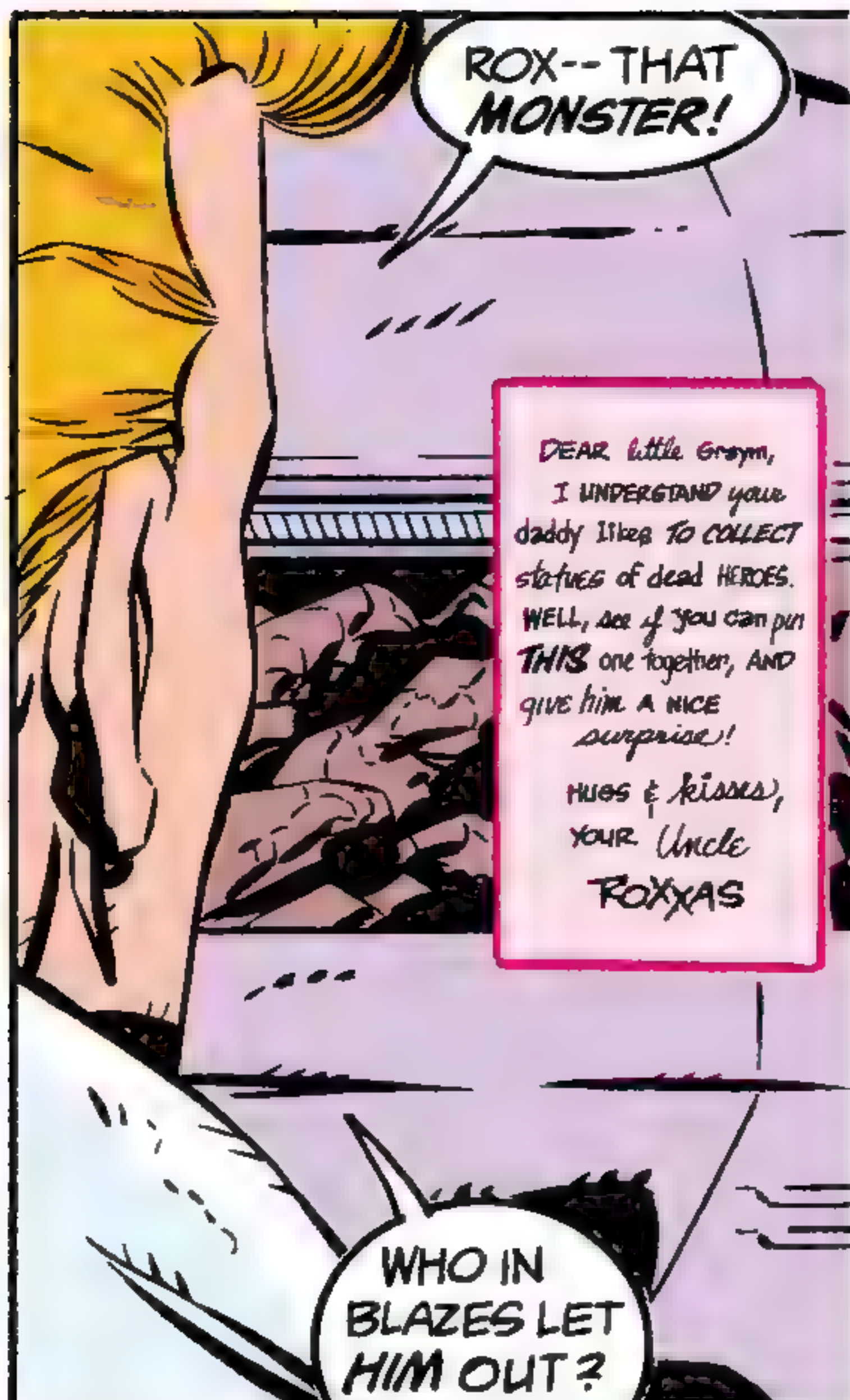
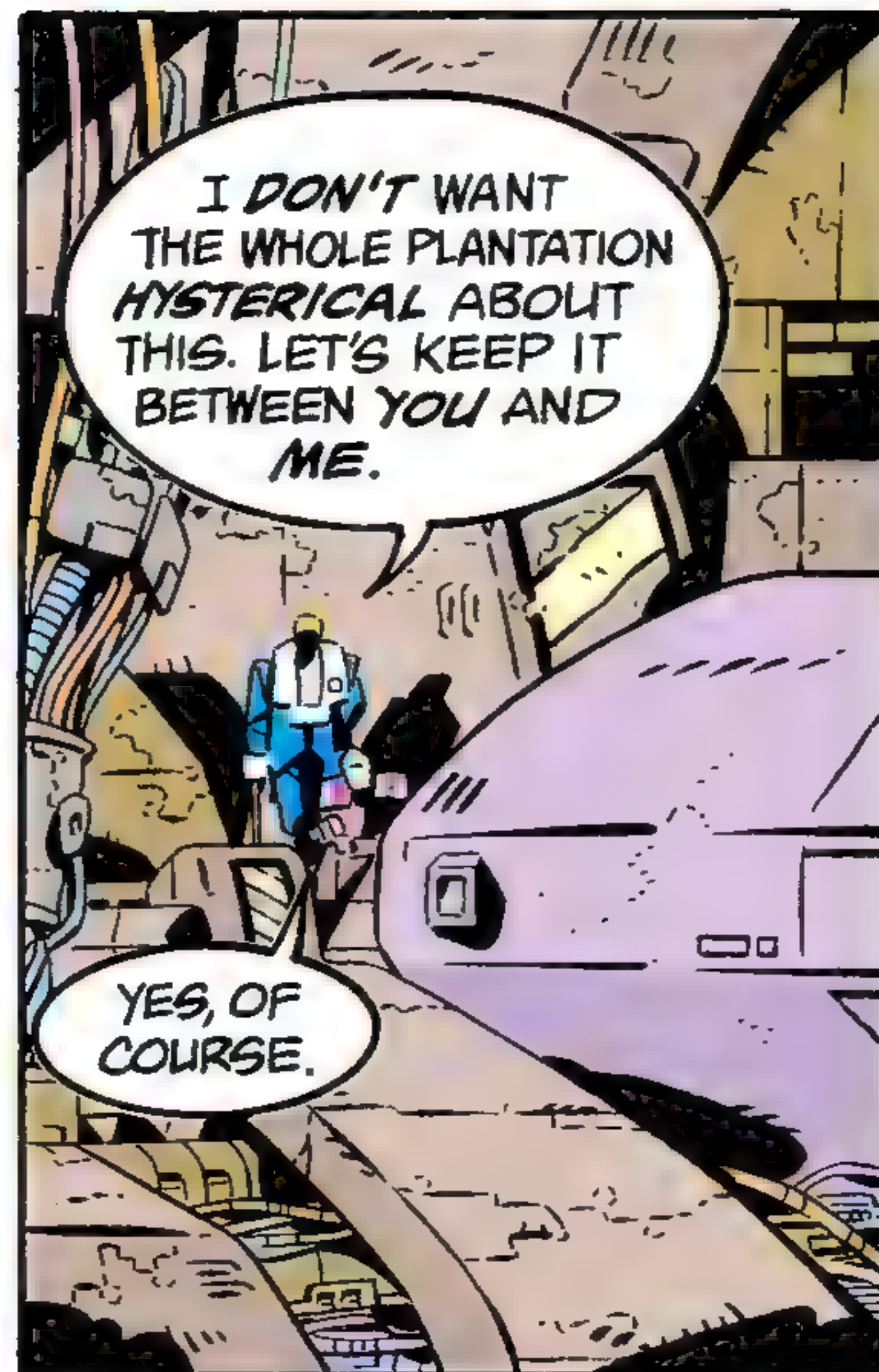
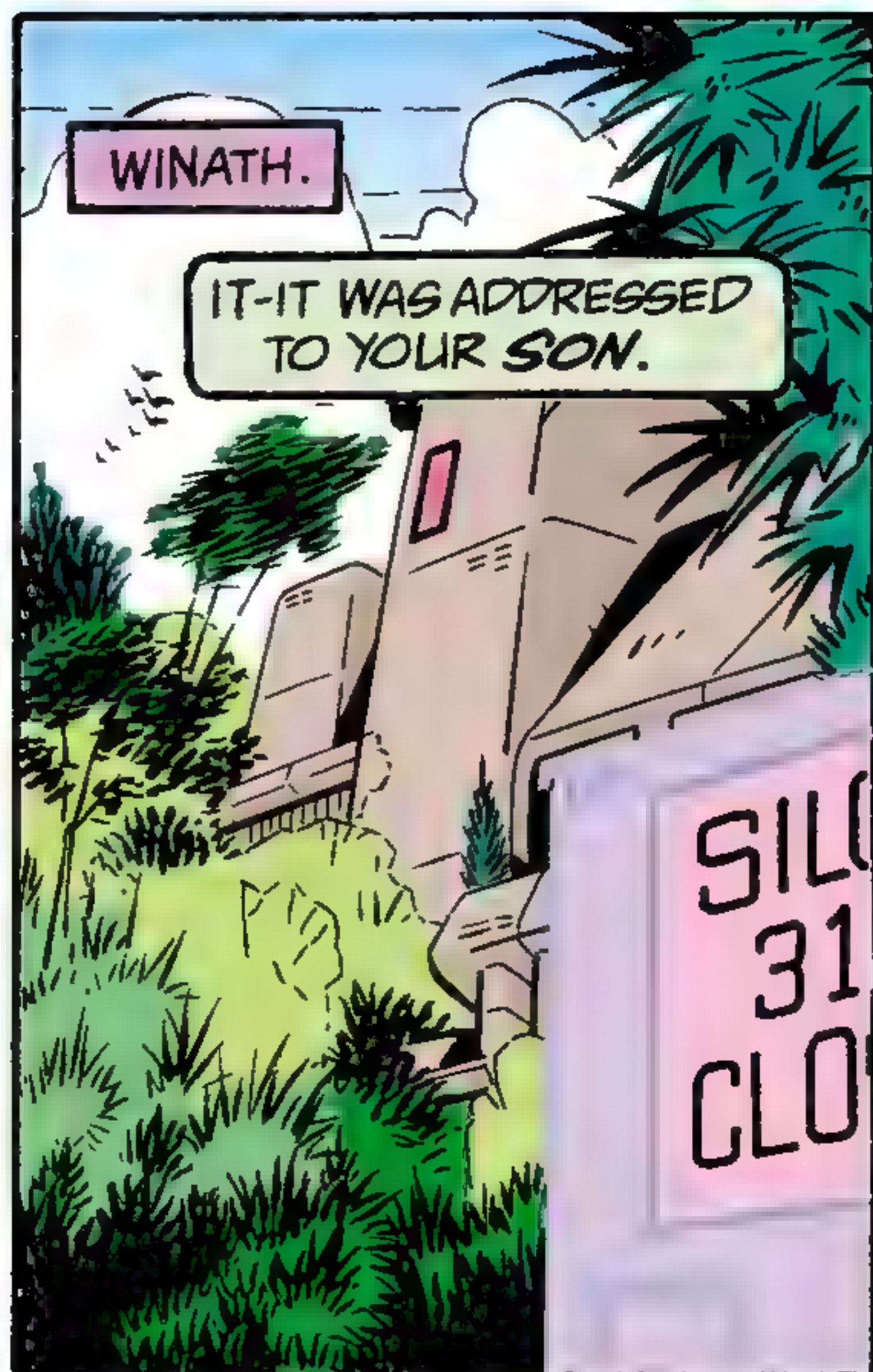
HELLO,  
BOYS.

GGAHH!

SHEEZ!

BLOODY  
LIBERTY!



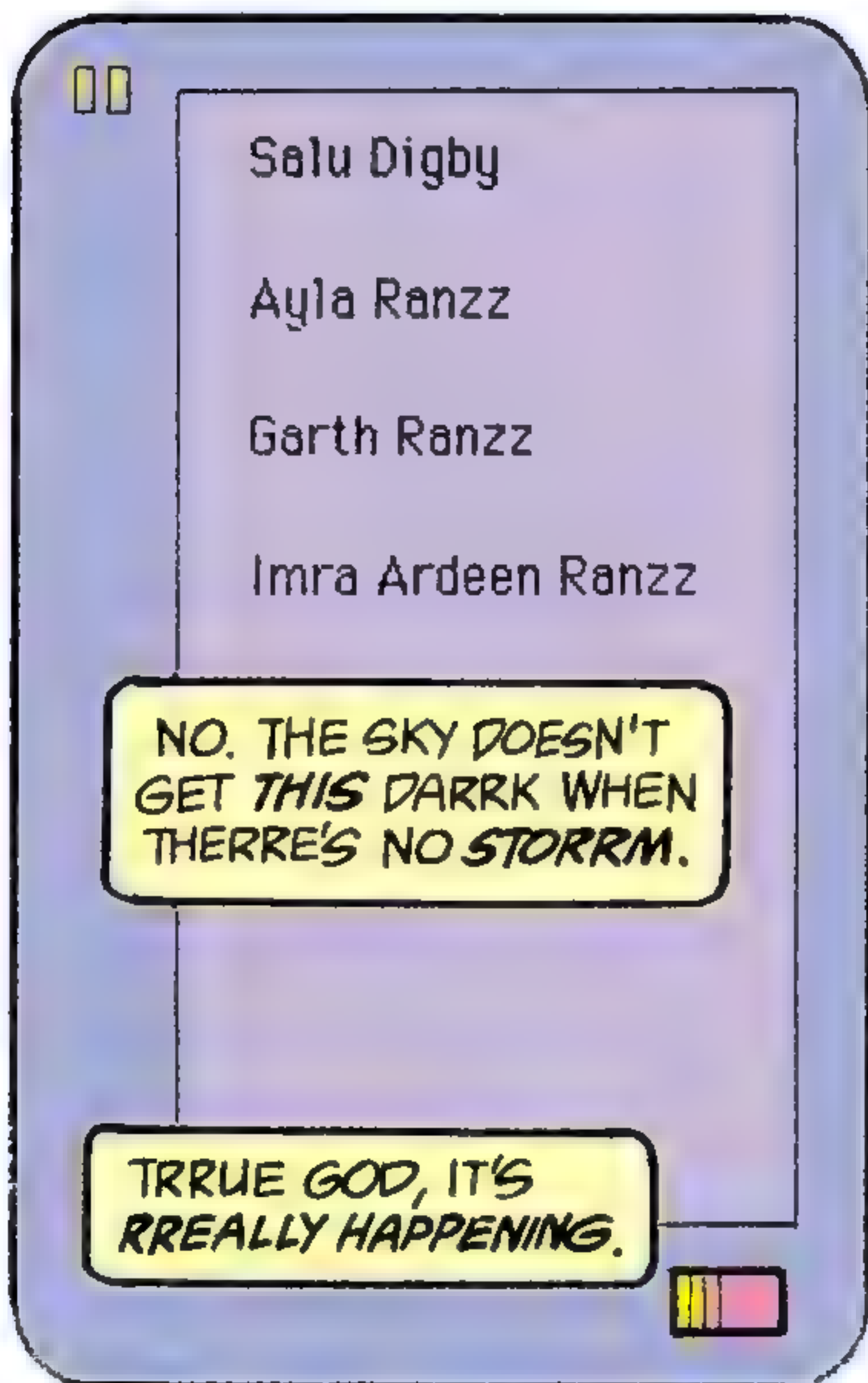






IT MUST BE, *ah*,  
COINCIDENCE.

PLANET: WINATH  
Tabulation of Known  
Legionnaires:



Salu Digby

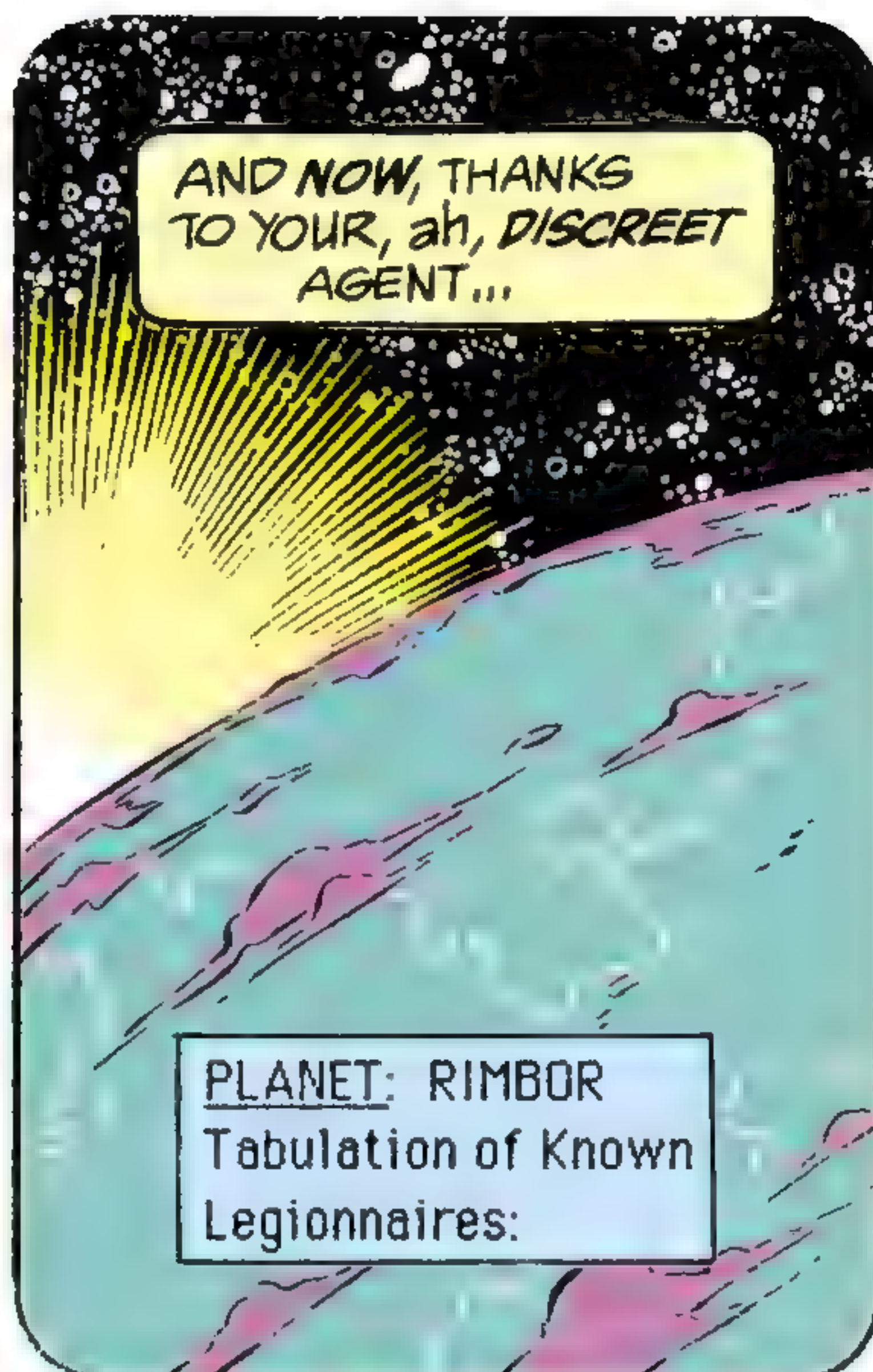
Ayla Ranzz

Garth Ranzz

Imra Ardeen Ranzz

NO. THE SKY DOESN'T  
GET *THIS* DARRK WHEN  
THERE'S NO *STORM*.

TRUE GOD, IT'S  
RREALLY HAPPENING.



AND NOW, THANKS  
TO YOUR, *ah*, DISCREET  
AGENT...

PLANET: RIMBOR  
Tabulation of Known  
Legionnaires:



Reep Daggle

Rokk Krinn

Jo Nah

THAT  
DEMENTED  
FOOL?

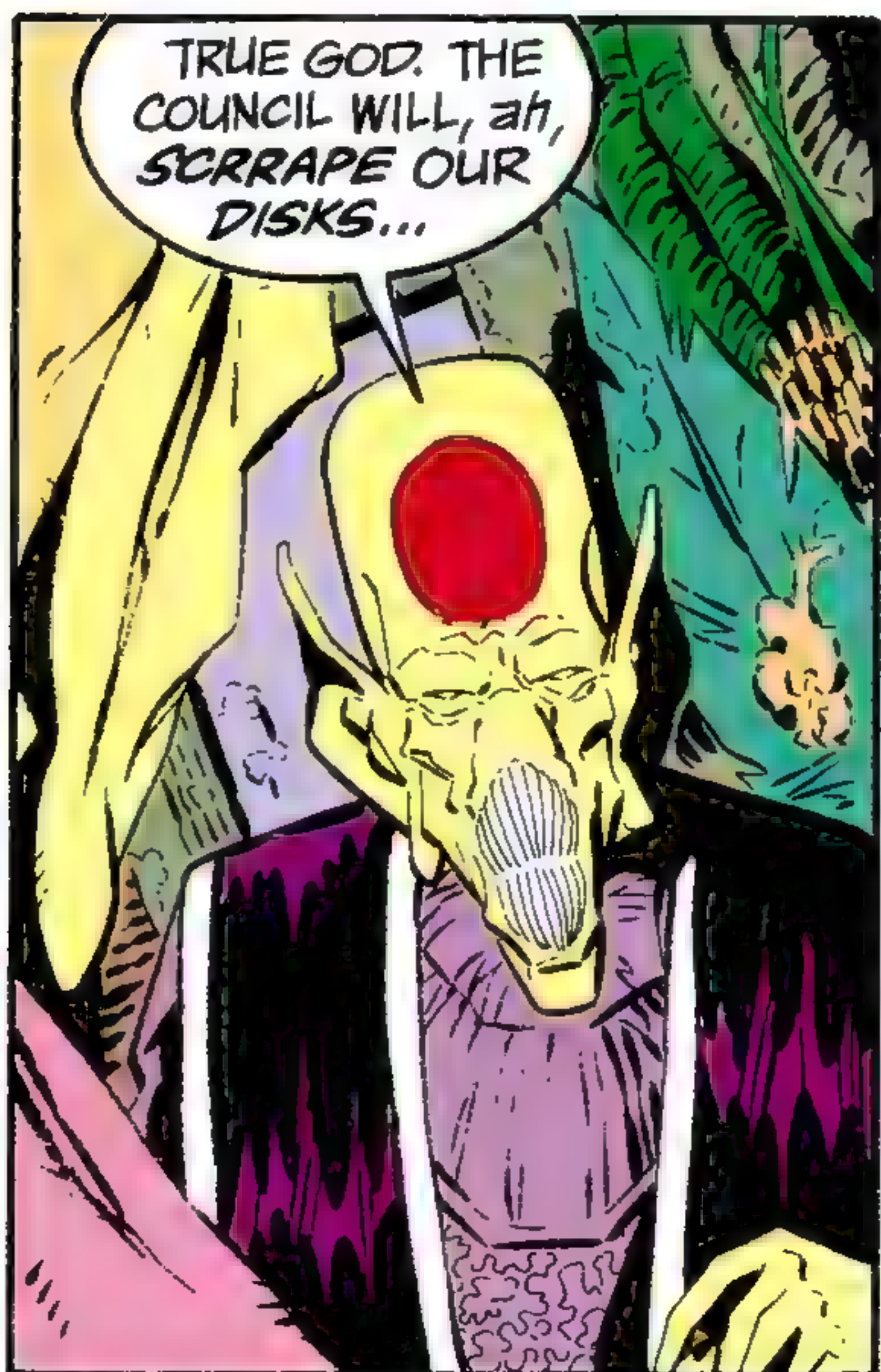


AS LONG AS HE  
WAS AT IT, WHY DIDN'T  
HE JUST SEND HALF  
OF IT TO RIMBORR?

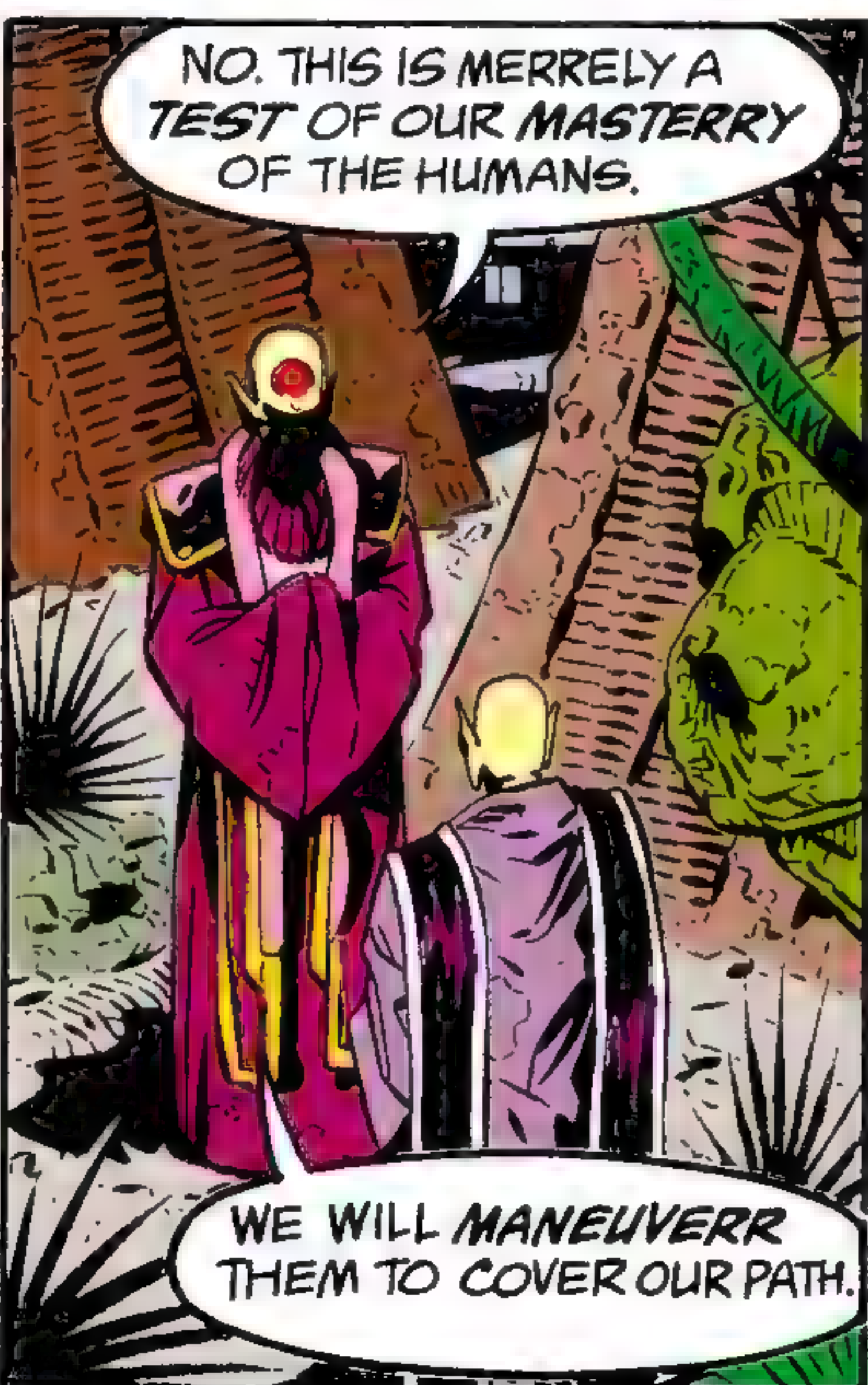
ALL OUR PLANS. SO  
CAREFULLY, *ah*, LAID...



THE MADMAN THREATENS  
TO EXPOSE EVERYTHING!



TRUE GOD. THE  
COUNCIL WILL, *ah*,  
SCRRAPPE OUR  
DISKS...



NO. THIS IS MERRELY A  
TEST OF OUR MASTERRY  
OF THE HUMANS.

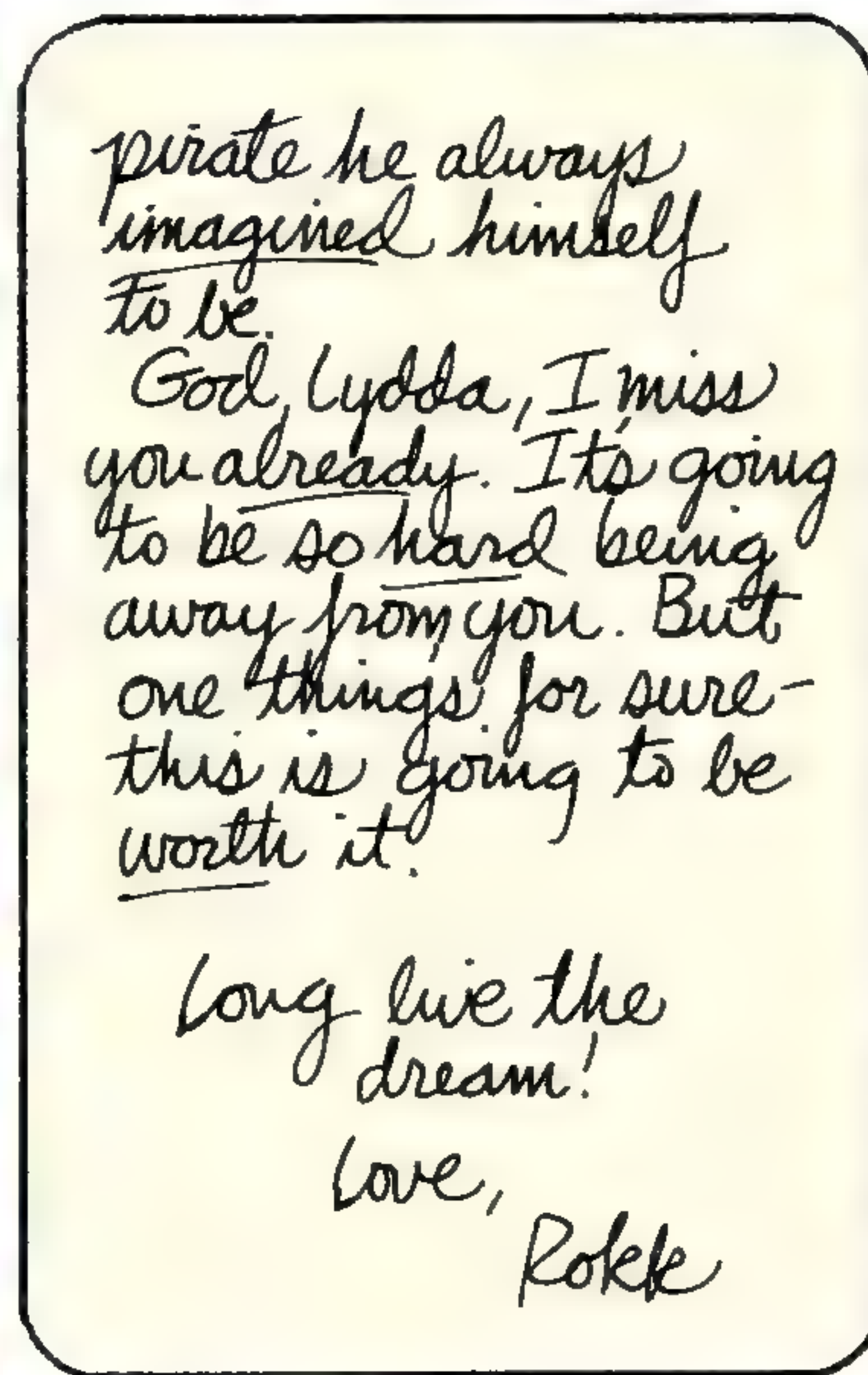
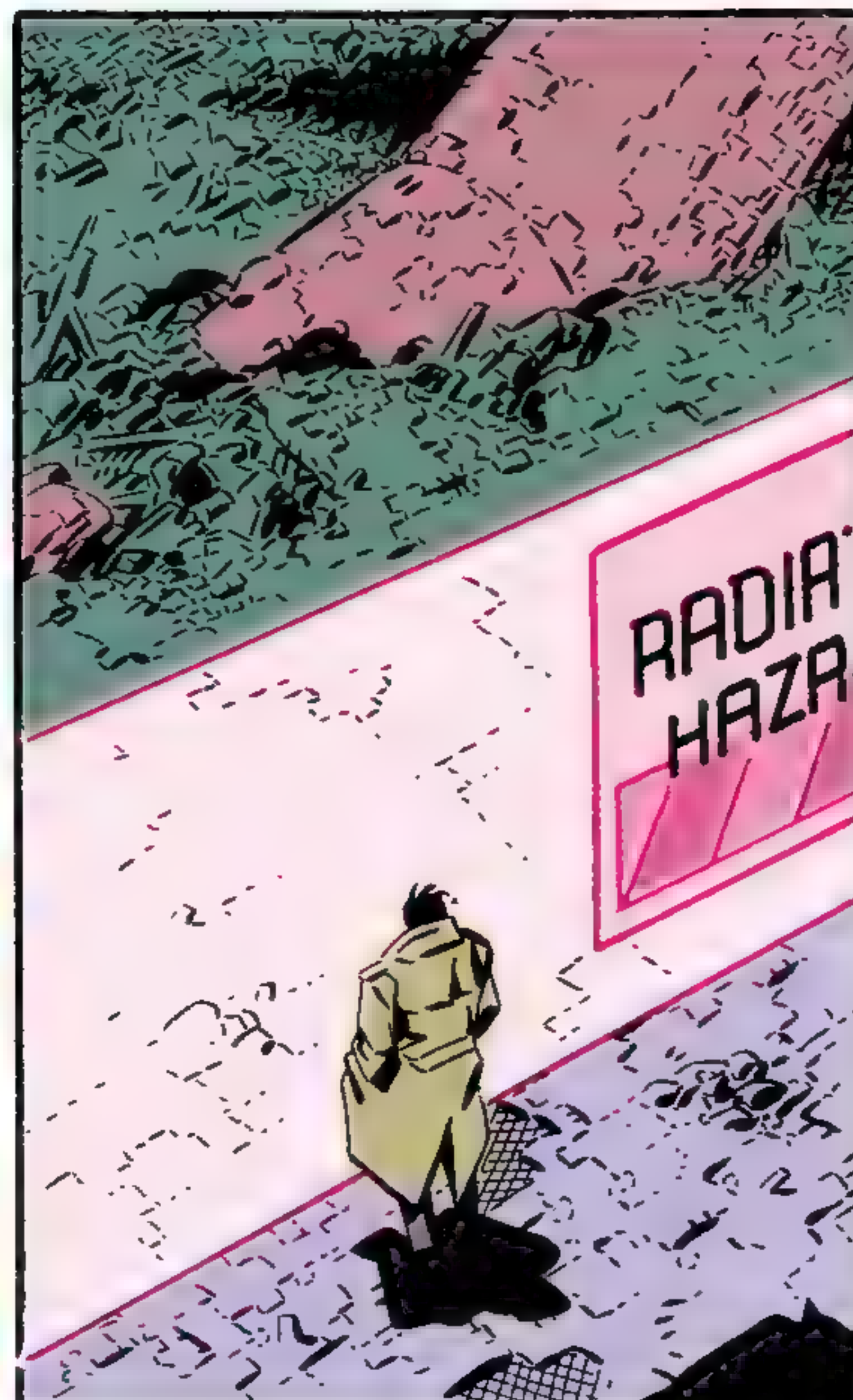
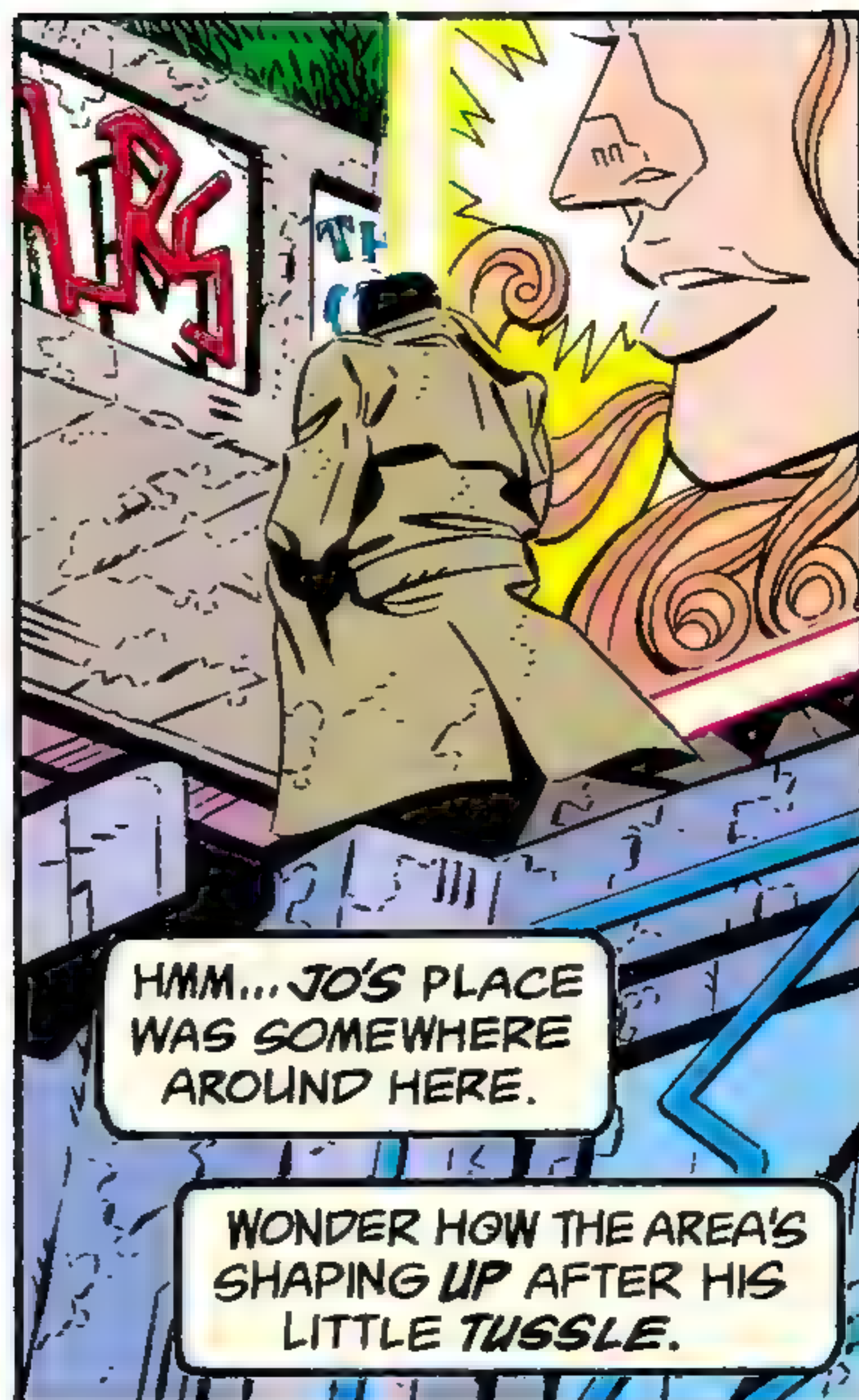
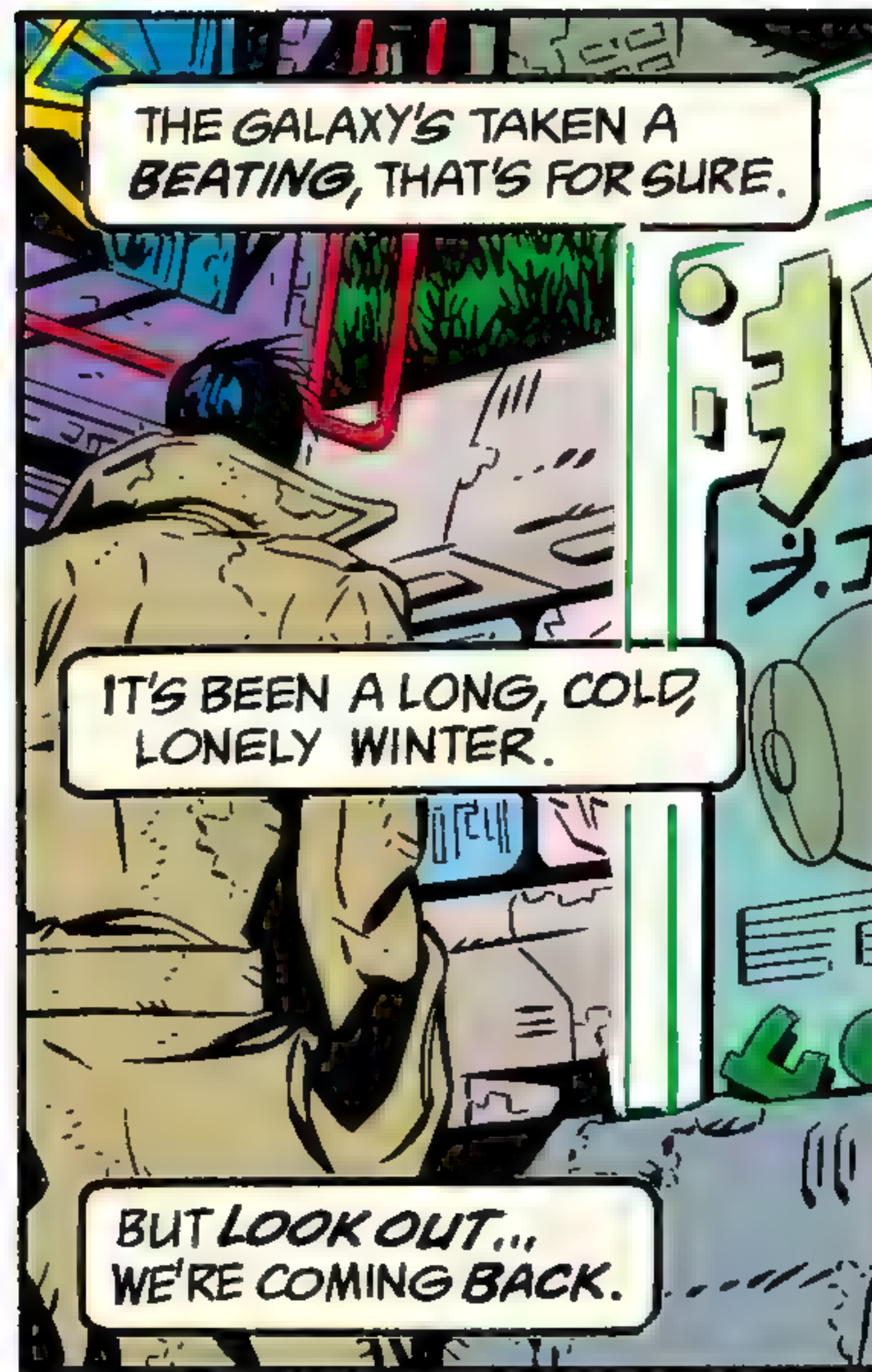
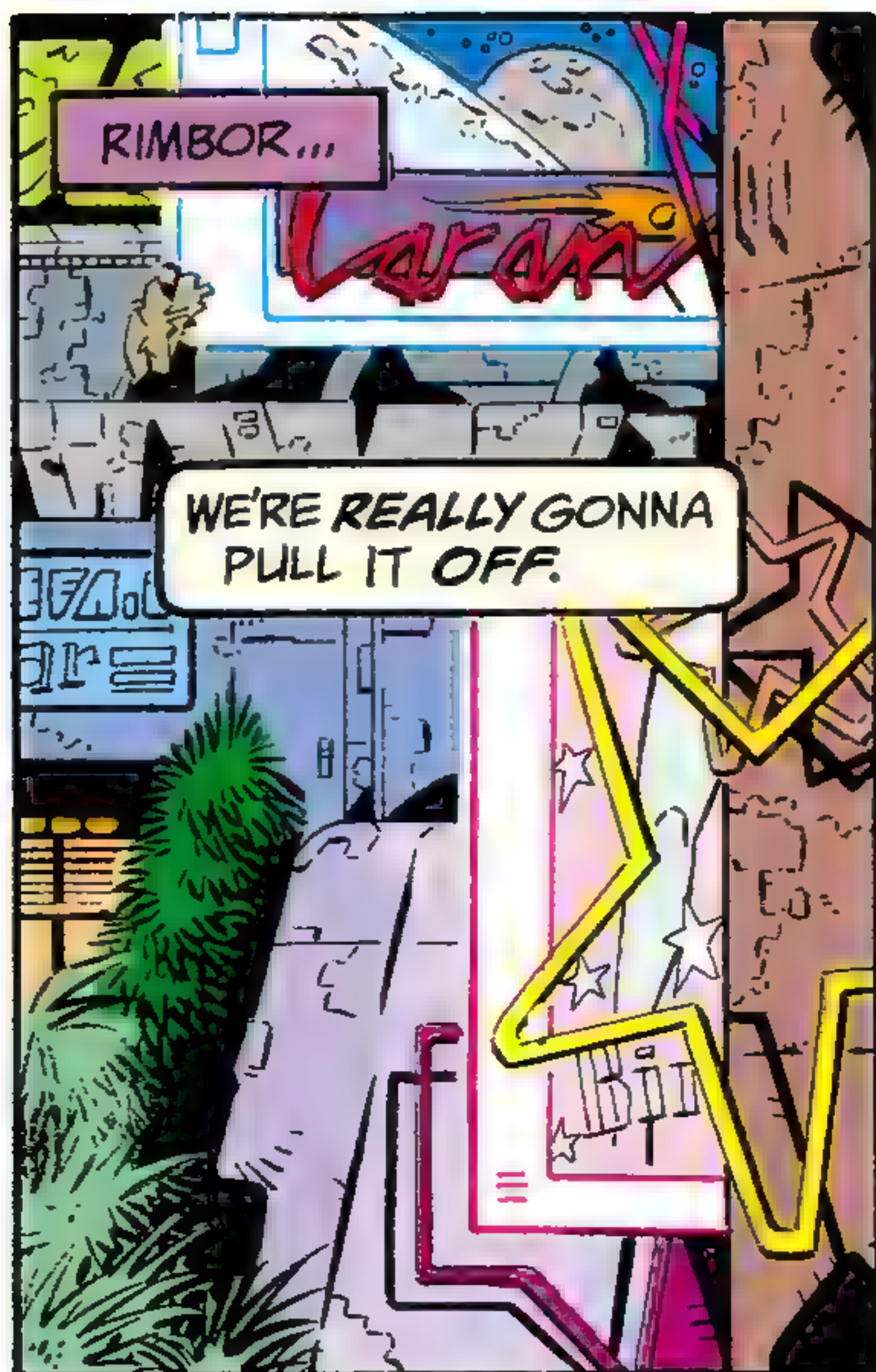
WE WILL MANEUVER  
THEM TO COVER OUR PATH.



THE EX-LEGIONNAIRES  
WILL NEVER KNOW.

THE COUNCIL  
WILL NEVER KNOW.









## **Now Reaping A Golden Harvest, Lightning Has Struck Twice For The First Family of Winath**

Imra Ardeen Ranzz is trying not to show it, but she's upset. Yet another foulup thousands of miles overhead in the Winath spaceport has delayed a shipment of the Lightning Ring Plantation's latest harvest of quatro.

Her handsome, flame-haired husband can't help but chuckle. "Look at her," he says. "She's trying so hard not to think about what this delay is going to cost us."

Imra shoots him a smile of playful annoyance. He's exactly right.

"It's like trying to get some old, corny tune out of your head," she acknowledges, almost apologetically. "I try not to think about it, but 50,000 credits a day down the tubes? The numbers start multiplying in my mind--100,000 in two days, 150,000 in three...like a dreadful old song you can't get out of your head."

There was a day when such worries would have seemed like pleasant diversions to Imra Ardeen and Garth Ranzz. Once founding members and leaders of the Legion of Super-Heroes, these two have, in their day, squared off nose-to-nose with the likes of Darkseid, Mordru, Universo, and even the Time Trapper.

The fact that they survived is nothing short of miraculous (Garth was himself officially declared dead for a four-month period before being revived at the expense of Antarian Prot'y I's life), and the fact that the galaxy survived those crisis-packed years is a tribute to the grit and fighting spirit of this couple and their comrades.

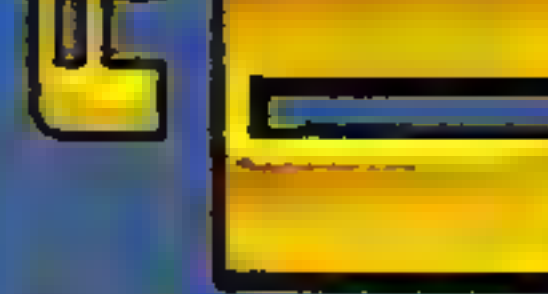
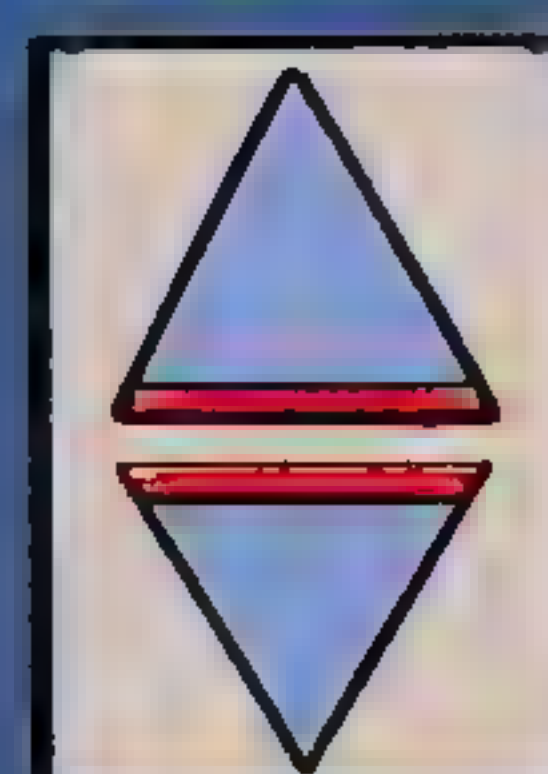
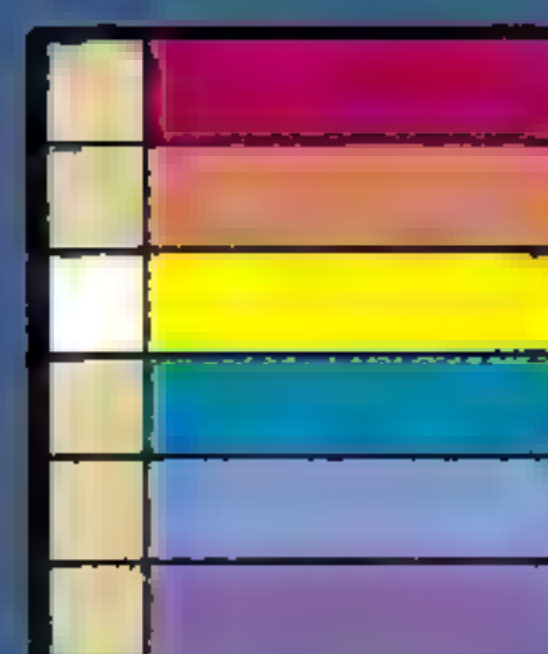
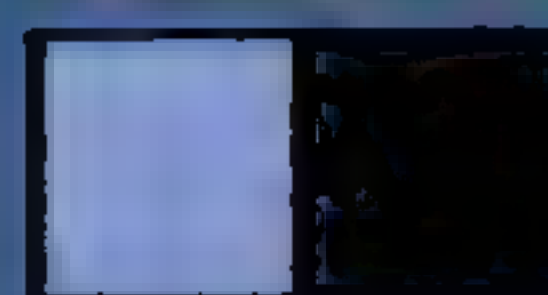
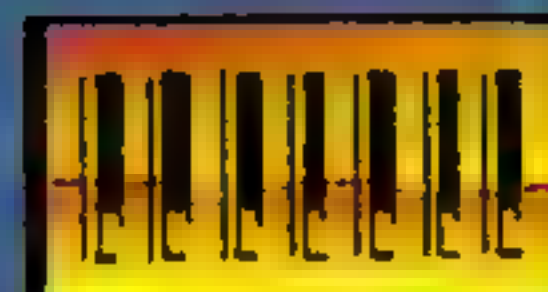
But since the disbanding of the Legion, Garth and Imra have refocused their indomitable wills on a new challenge--operating the Ranzz family plantation on Winath.

And they've proven to be every bit as good at running the fields as they were at running the Legion. Taking personal charge of a small, technologically backward estate in 2991, the couple has built the renamed Lightning Ring Plantation into the largest privately held agri-province on Winath. As the galaxy's dependence on Winathian bounty has grown, no other plantation has taken more efficient--and more fair--steps to satisfy that demand.

With customers across the galaxy now refusing to deal with any produce unless it comes from the Lightning Ring fields, sales of the Ranzzes quatro, zebra carrots, sweetpeas, red maize, melons, and squashes now total more than five billion credits a year.

But adjustment to this new life hasn't always been easy--as Imra's fuming over shipment delays demonstrates. "She still isn't used to the way we do things here on Winath," Garth smiles. "If a shipment is delayed, it's delayed. We don't worry about it, we find something useful to do in the meantime."

Her failure to fully assimilate into Winathian tranquility also manifests itself in more obvious visual ways. While most of the hands







((scroll up for previous text))

have no inhibitions about tending to their duties unclothed, Imra has seldom, if ever, been spied in the buff.

Though she's admirably maintained the figure that once filled out the most famous pink bikini in the galaxy, Imra isn't ready to show off what that skimpy outfit always left to the imagination. She confides, "There are some local customs that an upstanding daughter of Titan just could never get used to."

"It's a criminal waste," Garth says admiringly, though he, too, seldom appears in public undraped these days.

Unfortunately, in his case, modesty is not the reason. Garth's exaggerated limp serves as a constant reminder that his once perfectly honed body was invaded by the fearsome Validus Plague that ravaged Winath in 2990.

"It's somewhat consoling that we caught it early, and the disfigurement was pretty minor," Garth says, displaying the balloon-like pink swelling on his left leg and on the arm that had been artificially regrown in his Legion days.

The great sadness of the Ranzzes' life is the devastation wreaked by that tiny, complex bacteria mysteriously carried in the blood of their young son Garridan. Few of the thousands who contracted the plague were as lucky as Garth. Many died, and most suffered major disfigurements before the disease's spread was checked.

"Our goal now is to make sure that all the plague's victims are given the best care and therapy possible," Imra explains. To that end, they've formed the Validus Foundation. It's administered by Garth's older brother, Mekt, himself evidence of the miracles of modern psycho-medical technology

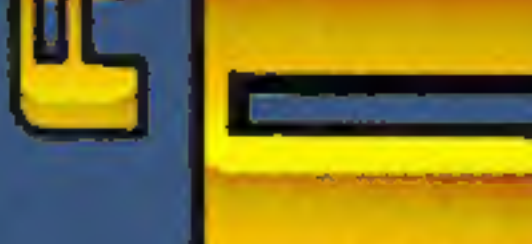
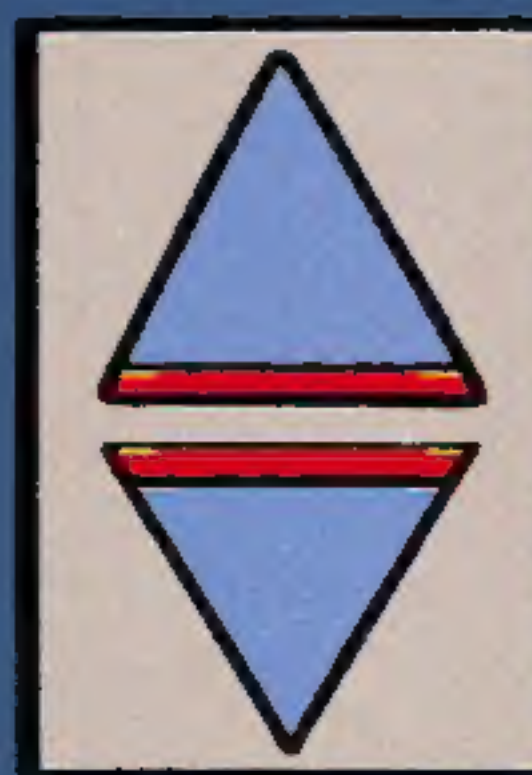
After serving much of his adult life in prison or on the run from the law, Mekt has undergone a complete transformation under the care of U.P. rehabilitationists.

But he doesn't credit the U.P. penal system with his redemption. "It was Garth and Imra," he said. "Their love finally got through to me. The turning point was when I realized the people I was trying the hardest to hurt were the people who loved me the most."

It was the Validus Foundation that has played such a key role in cleaning up the appalling condition the Ranzzes found on Quarantine when Garridan was checked in there.

Garridan is in greath health, and doctors there are optimistic they can find a means to return him to normal contact with Winathians and Titans, Imra reports.

That would mean a full-scale family reunion for the Ranzzes, whose estate now serves as home to Garridan's twin Graym (a pair of siblings is due in April); Mekt; Garth's ex-Legionnaire twin sister Ayla, who is the Ranzzes' top lieutenant and the most uninhibited of the ranch hands; and the latest addition, close family friend and ex-Legionnaire, Salu Digby.





# XENO BIOLOGY UPDATE

Interlac Edition/November, 2993

Subject: Winathococcus Validus

## An Overview of the Validus Plague On Winath

*The history and clinical manifestations of infection by Winathococcus Validus*

Q. Dox, XD, etc.; T.B. Katz, MD; J. Ligit, MD; R. Woker, MD

When the Winathococcus Validus bacteria was introduced into the population on Winath in 2990, the new organism went unrecognized because of the similarity of early symptoms to the more common Winathian Influenza. Only until the later, more obvious and ultimately fatal symptoms appeared did the medical field realize they were dealing with something new and devastatingly different.

Early symptoms were notoriously deceiving. They included fatigue, fever, joint and muscle pain, night chills, and weight loss, and were often mistaken for other illnesses until early cases thought recovered displayed the secondary and more serious symptoms: Loss of muscle coordination, excruciating pain in the extremities with hypertrophy of the limbs and loss of function of the hands and feet. The skeletal changes were also present in the skull with enlargement and deterioration of cranial bones.<sup>1</sup> If left untreated, blindness would result. In time, the patient would begin to suffer paranoid delusions, uncontrolled mood changes, and, ultimately, insanity.<sup>2</sup>

The illness was dubbed the Validus Syndrome because the bacteria was introduced to the planet by the child Garridan Ranzz, believed to have come into contact with the infection during a little-understood incident in his infancy in which the tyrant Darkseid abducted the child and, through unknown means, transformed the infant into the creature known as Validus.<sup>3,4</sup> As the number of cases continued to grow, the panicked population of Winath began calling it the Validus Plague.

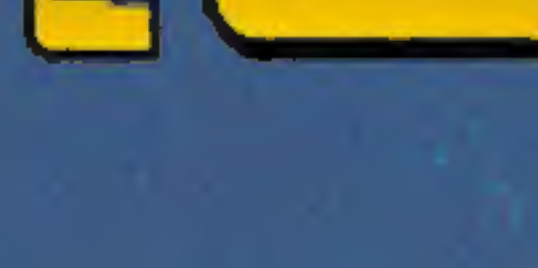
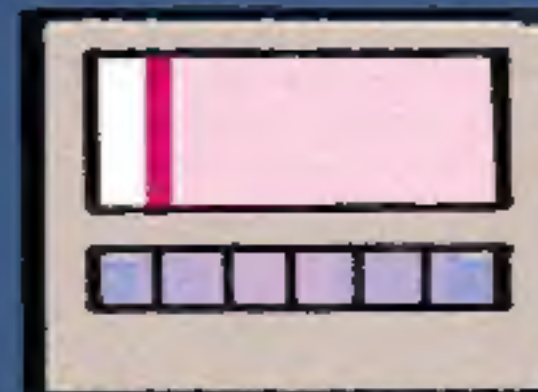
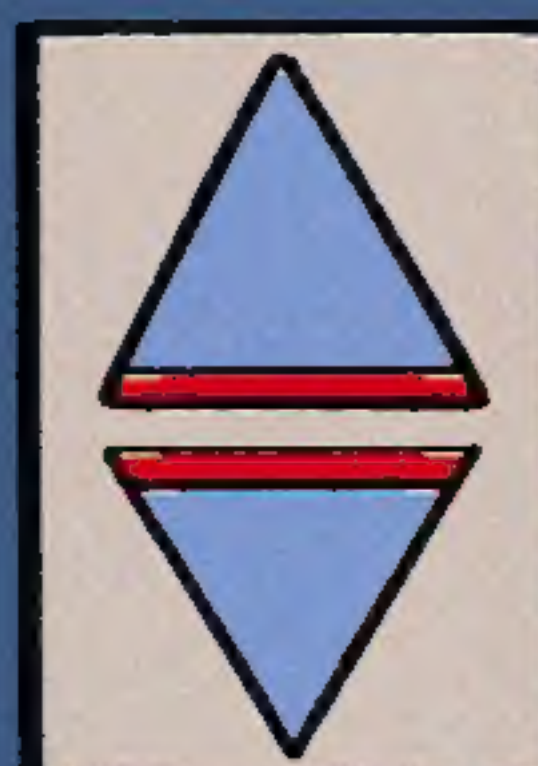
When the secondary syndrome presented itself in a population thought recovered from the illness, a request was made to the U.P. Center for Disease Control on Quarantine for assistance in isolating the responsible agent. A team of specialists was dispatched from Quarantine. Noted scientist and former Legionnaire Querl Dox joined the contingent en route to Winath.

The team immediately isolated the organism, but the bacteria's vector was not so easily discerned. Further investigation revealed that the organism could live only for a short time outside the darkness and constant temperature of the body; thus, the most common means of transmission and infection were eliminated. Patient histories at first appeared to be useless, as no common factor seemed to exist between all the victims except the time of infection and geographic proximity to the Haslemere, Morely outbreak point or the many secondary concentrations of infection that sprung up shortly afterwards.

It was Querl Dox who discovered the single common factor among all the cases: contact with the child Garridan Ranzz. It was Dox's good fortune to be staying at the Ranzz apartment in Haslemere, where the link between the child and the Plague's victims (including the boy's father) soon became obvious. Dox traced the child's movements and discovered his presence coincided with Plague outbreaks elsewhere.

Garridan was immediately placed in an isolation suit, while blood

((scroll down for further text))





# XENOBIOLOGY UPDATE

Interlac Edition/November, 1993

Subject: Winathococcus Validus

((scroll up for previous text))

samples were analyzed. The distinctive bacteria was discovered in his blood, as well as in other bodily fluids, and in his exhalations. Mere presence within one meter of the child could constitute exposure to the bacteria.

The bacteria is immediately and routinely destroyed by the immune systems of all races except those reflecting the boy's genetic heritage--Winathians and Titans. That unusual pattern apparently reflects how specifically the characteristics of the bacteria are tailored to the genetic makeup of its original host.

The infection in the child's father, Garth Ranzz, provided a clue as to how the bacteria chose its victims. Despite his otherwise exemplary health, the disease manifested itself in Ranzz's right arm, an artificial limb that had suffered persistent minor circulatory and nervous disorders.

It was discovered that those who were exposed to the bacteria and did not suffer the effects of the Plague were those in particularly good health with exceptional immune systems. Such common factors as exposure to prolonged stress, lack of exercise, and previous debilitating illnesses marked many of the disease's victims. The only certifiable case of immunity is Garridan's twin brother, Graym. Secondary carriers of the bacteria proved not to be infectious in any way.

Once the source of the infection was discovered, a form of treatment was quickly synthesized using Garridan's blood as a model. The chemical agents that render the bacteria inert in Garridan's system were synthetically duplicated and introduced into the bloodstreams of the victims, arresting the progress of the disease. Unfortunately, the treatment does not cure or reverse its effects or protect against future infection. Boosters are required, though the duration of the treatment must be assessed as these first subjects develop case histories.

Garridan has been isolated on Quarantine with the emergency team for further study, and the incidence of new infection on Winath appears to have been halted.

<sup>1</sup>Zan Orbal, "The Survivors of the Validus Plague," *JUPMA*, Dec. 1991:12:232-237. In extreme cases, some victims have been kept alive through the substitution of plexifab cranial domes for the deteriorating skull.

<sup>2</sup>D.J. Gel Mor, MD. "Update on Winathococcus Validus," *JUPMA*, Oct. 1991:10:12-15.

<sup>3</sup>Q. Dox, XD, etc., S. Pa Kar, MD, "Tracing the Deadly Plague on Winath," *New England Journal of Medicine*, April 1990:12-74; 356-361. In some extreme cases, the disfigurations follow a pattern somewhat reminiscent of the Validus creature's appearance. Q. Dox has theorized that the bacteria may have been the agent that caused those transformations in the Ranzz child during his abduction by Darkseid.

<sup>4</sup>Rond Vidar, "Time Travel and the Validus Syndrome," *Time Institute Journal*, 1993:1:1-6. Because Darkseid sent the creature back in time to wreak its havoc, some also theorize the bacteria may have been bred in the unpredictable and little-understood Time Stream.

